

**A sua Eminenza Rev.ma  
il Cardinale Carlo Maria Martini  
nel suo 70° compleanno**

Nel 1978 l'allora P. Martini lasciava il Pontificio Istituto Biblico, dove era stato Professore (dal 1962) e Rettore (a partire dal 1968); nuovi importanti incarichi lo attendevano, culminati nel grave compito di pastore della Chiesa Ambrosiana. Negli anni della sua docenza al Biblico aveva fatto parte del Comitato di Redazione della nostra Rivista, e vi aveva contribuito con una serie di articoli e recensioni nell'ambito della critica testuale e dell'esegesi del Nuovo Testamento.

Da più di quindici anni ormai la cura pastorale ha assorbito tutte le sue energie. Al lavoro accademico è subentrato l'ascolto delle necessità della sua grande diocesi, lo studio delle problematiche che interrogano l'uomo contemporaneo, e la trasmissione sapiente di quanto sgorga dalla lettura meditata della Parola di Dio. E in questo, nonostante l'evidente diversità di approccio e di modalità comunicativa, traspare una continuità di impegno e di intenti, e si rivela l'identica passione per la Scrittura che avevano caratterizzato la sua carriera di studioso e di collaboratore di *Biblica*.

Siamo lieti di rivolgere al nostro P. Martini l'augurio di un fecondo esercizio del suo ministero ecclesiale, riconoscanti per il fedele e coraggioso servizio della Parola. Ricordando con nostalgia la sua presenza tra noi, a lui dedichiamo il primo numero della Rivista nell'anno 1997.

il Comitato di Direzione  
e di Redazione di *Biblica*

## Romains 5,12-21

### Logique, sens et fonction

Les difficultés de Rm 5,12-21 sont proverbiales, et prétendre leur donner une solution peut passer pour de la vanité — laquelle comporte toujours une grande part de naïveté. Mais les études récentes parues sur ce passage permettent de mieux comprendre sa logique et sa cohérence. C'est donc leur faire honneur que d'aller plus loin, et surtout reconnaître tout ce que nous leur devons.

Sans nier l'utilité des analyses de détail, sur lesquelles nous nous appuierons, il nous a semblé plus opératoire de présenter l'ensemble du passage dans sa dynamique, pour montrer combien les nombreuses difficultés sont liées entre elles, et qu'une solution ne peut se dessiner que si l'on met ensemble tous les morceaux du puzzle.

#### I. Problèmes de composition

Mettre en évidence la composition d'un passage, le rythme de sa progression, sa dynamique, s'avère souvent utile pour son interprétation. En effet, si la composition n'est qu'une ossature, elle permet néanmoins de repérer le modèle conceptuel et/ou littéraire suivi avec plus ou moins d'originalité par un auteur, et peut alors fournir des indications utiles sur sa fonction.

La division la plus communément admise, parce que fondée sur les répétitions de vocabulaire, les oppositions entre acteurs (Adam, le péché et la mort d'une part, Christ, la grâce et la vie de l'autre) et les articulations rhétoriques (les comparaisons, le raisonnement *a fortiori*), est de type concentrique (en ABA) ou chiasique (en ABBA). On en trouvera une très brève description dans le commentaire d'U. Wilckens<sup>(1)</sup>:

<sup>(1)</sup> U. WILCKENS, *Der Brief an die Römer (Röm 1-5)* (Neukirchen 1978) 306-308. Signalons d'autres divisions de type concentrique (en ABA), divergentes dans les détails, celle de P. LAMARCHE et C. LE DÛ, *Épître aux Romains V-VIII*. Structure littéraire et sens (Paris 1980) 92-94: A = vv. 12-14 du péché à la mort – avant la loi; B = vv. 15-17 raisonnement *a*

A = 5,12-14 péché, mort et loi.

B = 5,15-19 (ou B = vv.15-17 + B' = vv.18-19) parallélismes antithétiques (οὐχ ὥς... suivi de εἰ γάρ, deux fois en 15-17; ὥς/ὥσπερ en 18-19), avec une claire *amplificatio*.

A' = 5,20-21 loi, péché, mort - victoire de la grâce.

À cette division, tout à fait acceptable, car elle repose sur la convergence de différents critères et indices, s'opposent celles basées sur un seul critère, comme le montre la proposition de Ian H. Thomson<sup>(2)</sup>, qui voit le passage construit selon un chiasme parfait<sup>(3)</sup>. Ne sont ici retenus que les vocables ayant permis de mettre en évidence la composition:

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| a = v. 12  | ἡ ἁμαρτία ὁ θάνατος   |
| b = v. 13  | ἄχρι γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία μὴ ὄντος νόμου,  |
| c = v. 14  | ἐπὶ τοὺς μὴ ἁμαρτήσαντας ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοιώματι τῆς παραβάσεως Ἀδάμ   |
| d = v. 15a | Ἄλλ' οὐχ ὥς τὸ παράπτωμα  |
| e = v. 15b | εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς παραπτώματι οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου |
| f = v. 16  |   |
| e' = v. 17 | εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς παραπτώματι ὁ θάνατος ἐβασίλευσεν διὰ τοῦ ἐνὸς, πολλῷ μᾶλλον οἱ τὴν περισσεΐαν τῆς χάριτος               |
| d' = v. 18 | Ἄρα οὖν ὥς δι' ἐνὸς παραπτώματος εἰς πάντα ἀνθρώπους εἰς κατάκριμα,   |
| c' = v. 19 | ὥσπερ γὰρ διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν   |

*fortiori* (en deux étapes: v. 15 et vv. 16-17); A' = vv. 18-21 de la justification à la vie sans la loi; ou encore celle de D. B. GARLINGTON, *Faith, Obedience and Perseverance* (WUNT 79; Tübingen 1994) 79-80, de type conceptuel, et qui ne considère que la *synkrisis* Adam/Christ et met en conséquence à part les vv. 20-21: «A = v. 12 the initial statement of the old humanity's solidarity with the first Adam and its consequences; B = vv. 13-17 justification and elaboration of the proposition begun in v. 12; A' = vv. 18-19 recapitulation and formal statement of the analogous work of Adam and Christ and its consequences». On verra plus loin en quoi les propositions de Le Dû-Lamarche et Garlington sont fautives.

<sup>(2)</sup> I. H. THOMSON, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters* (Sheffield 1995) 186-192. Sont soulignés les mots en parallèles en a et a', b et b', etc., à partir desquels Thomson a pu se prononcer pour une composition de type concentrique.

<sup>(3)</sup> Il serait plus exact de parler de composition concentrique.

- b' = v. 20 νόμος δὲ παρεισῆλθεν, ἵνα πλεονάσῃ τὸ παράπτωμα·  
οὐδὲ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία, ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ  
χάρις,  
a' = v. 21 ἵνα ὥστερ ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ

Les répétitions lexicographiques sollicitées sont indéniables. Mais ce sont les oublis — ou les omissions — qui frappent<sup>(4)</sup>. Les répétitions retenues ne suffisent pas pour mettre en évidence une division basée sur les parallélismes, car, du v. 15 au v. 21, le texte est aussi manifestement structuré à l'aide d'autres parallélismes, syntaxiques et sémantiques qui, même à première lecture, s'imposent comme des indices de composition dominants: il suffit de relever l'opposition entre les premières propositions de chaque phrase — le plus souvent subordonnées —, au contenu négatif, et les principales, au contenu positif. La division de Thomson laisse trop de données pour être totalement satisfaisante: la répétition insistante des comparaisons, en son mouvement de balancier, doit absolument être prise en compte.

Avant de proposer une composition d'ensemble, il importe de considérer les parallélismes de tous ordres qui scandent la réflexion de l'apôtre aux vv. 15-21<sup>(5)</sup>. Le tableau 1 met bien en évidence la figure dominante de ces versets, à savoir la *synkrisis*, la comparaison entre deux figures (Adam et le Christ), entre deux modes d'être et d'agir (désobéissance et obéissance), entre deux règnes (péché, jugement et mort, auxquels s'opposent la grâce, la justification et la vie). Mais une *synkrisis* a des fonctions diverses selon le contexte; elle peut souligner les ressemblances ou les différences, voire les oppositions. Que Rm 5,15-21 mette en relief des similitudes, la répétition des ὡς (ou ὥστερ) ..., οὕτως καὶ le montre.

(4) En particulier les « de même que..., de même aussi... » des vv. 15.18.19.21.

(5) Cf. aussi, tout récemment, O. HOFIUS, «Die Adam-Christus-Antithese und das Gesetz. Erwägungen zu Röm 5,12-21», *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (ed. J.D.G. DUNN) (WUNT 89; Tübingen 1996) 165-206 (en particulier 167). Sont soulignées les conjonctions qui se correspondent et ont été laissées pour compte dans la disposition de Thomson.



Tableau 1

	<i>Adam – péché – mort</i>	<i>Christ – grâce – mort</i>
<i>vv. 15 thèse</i>	15 Ἄλλ' οὐχ ὥς τὸ παράπτωμα	15 οὕτως καὶ τὸ χάρισμα
<i>raison</i>	εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς παραπτώματι οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον,	πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἢ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐπερίσσευσεν.
<i>vv. 16-17 thèse</i>	16 καὶ οὐχ ὥς δι' ἐνὸς ἁμαρτήσαντος	16 τὸ δῶρημα·
<i>raison 1</i>	τὸ μὲν γὰρ κρίμα ἐξ ἐνὸς εἰς κατάκριμα,	τὸ δὲ χάρισμα ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων εἰς δικαίωμα.
<i>raison 2</i>	17 εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς παραπτώματι ὁ θάνατος ἐβασίλευσεν διὰ τοῦ ἐνός,	17 πολλῷ μᾶλλον οἱ τὴν περὶ σσεῖαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύσουσιν διὰ τοῦ ἐνός Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
<i>vv. 18-19 conclusions</i>	18 Ἄρα οὖν ὥς δι' ἐνὸς παραπτώματος εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς κατάκριμα,  19 ὥσπερ γὰρ διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἐνός ἀνθρώπου ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοί,	18 οὕτως καὶ δι' ἐνός δικαίωματος εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς  19 οὕτως καὶ διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἐνός δίκαιοι κατασταθίσονται οἱ πολλοί.
<i>vv. 20-21 finalités respectives</i>	20 νόμος δὲ παρεισῆλθεν, ἵνα πλεονάσῃ τὸ παράπτωμα:  21 ἵνα ὥσπερ ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ,	20 οὐ δὲ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία, ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις,  21 οὕτως καὶ ἡ χάρις βασιλεύσῃ διὰ δικαιοσύνης εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

Les situations décrites se ressemblent parce que de chaque côté Paul met en rapport les mêmes éléments, *un seul* et *tous*:

- v. 18a de même que  
par la ... d'un seul ...  
pour tous les hommes,  
v. 19a de même que  
par la ... d'un seul homme,  
la multitude ...,

- v. 18b de même aussi  
par le ... d'un seul ...  
pour tous les hommes.  
v. 19b de même aussi  
par la ... d'un seul,  
la multitude ...

Mais si cette *synkrisis* vise à mettre en évidence des ressemblances (vv. 18-21), elle commence par une double négation (vv. 15-17), qui souligne les différences, et laisse entendre que les ressemblances doivent être comprises sur un fond d'opposition ou de contraste:

v. 15a	pas comme la chute,	v. 15b	de même aussi le don gracieux.
v. 16a	pas comme par un seul ayant péché,	v. 16b	le don gratuit.

Le grec du v. 15ab a néanmoins été l'objet d'interprétations opposées, car contrairement à l'usage courant de ὡς<sup>(6)</sup>... οὕτως καί, où la valence est la même dans la subordonnée et dans la principale<sup>(7)</sup>, c'est la seule fois où la subordonnée comparative est précédée d'une négation, rendant impossibles ou incorrectes les traductions littérales (« Mais pas comme la chute, de même aussi le don de grâce »). Voilà pourquoi la presque totalité des commentaires omettent le οὕτως καί et lisent la phrase comme une opposition analogue à celle du v. 16a: « Mais il n'en est pas du don gracieux comme de la chute ». On peut toutefois, à la suite de S. Porter, voir en ce verset et les deux suivants une comparaison positive<sup>(8)</sup>. Le style serait alors diatribique et dialogal, comme dans les chapitres précédents<sup>(9)</sup>:

v. 15a *demande*: « But does not<sup>(10)</sup> the free gift operate just like the trespass did? »<sup>(11)</sup>;

<sup>(6)</sup> Ou encore ὡσπέρ, καθάπερ...

<sup>(7)</sup> Valence positive: « de même que..., de même aussi », ou négative: « de même que... ne... pas, de même aussi... ne... pas ». Tous les emplois néotestamentaires (excepté Rm 5,15a) respectent cet usage.

<sup>(8)</sup> S.E. PORTER, « The Argument of Romans 5: Can a Rhetorical Question Make a Difference? », *JBL* 110 (1991) 655-677 (sur ces versets, voir 672-674). Cet article reprend, en le modifiant et en le complétant, une hypothèse déjà émise par C.C. CARAGOUNIS, « Romans 5.15-16 in the Context of 5.12-21: Contrast or Comparison? », *NTS* 31 (1985) 142-148.

<sup>(9)</sup> Cf. le nombre élevé de questions en Rm 3 (vv. 1.3.5.7.9.27.29.31 et 4,1). Il n'est pas de soi impossible que la série reprenne en Rm 5,15, mais on doit absolument tenir compte du type de discours tenu par Paul: si en Rm 3 les questions s'imposent eu égard aux propos de Rm 2,17-29 sur la question de l'identité juive, il n'en est pas de même pour Rm 5, qui introduit une autre section et n'a pas encore exposé les idées (cela sera fait en 5,20-21) qui vont de nouveau soulever des objections (cf. les questions de Rm 6,1,15; 7,7.13) et engendrer les différentes sections de la *probatio* constituée par Rm 6-8.

<sup>(10)</sup> Porter note que ἀλλ'οὐ est typique de la diatribe, et que le οὐχ prépare la réponse positive.

<sup>(11)</sup> Porter fait observer que le οὕτως καί (« de même [...] aussi »; 50x dans le NT – 27x chez Paul) a une fonction comparative, et n'équivaut pas au καὶ οὕτως (« et ainsi »; 16x dans le NT – 9x chez Paul) du v. 12b, qui amorce une conclusion. Le οὕτως καί de 5,18.19.21 ayant manifestement un sens comparatif, il doit en être de même au v. 15.

v. 15b *réponse* positive implicite: «certainement!» (vaí).

v. 16a *demande*: «And is not the free gift transmitted in the same way as sin was transmitted by the one who sinned?»

v. 16b *réponse* positive implicite, comme en 15b.

Que veut donc souligner Paul, les ressemblances ou les différences? L'interprétation courante semble avoir raison d'insister sur les oppositions, pour des raisons syntaxiques et rhétoriques. Syntactiquement d'abord, l'expression οὐχ ὥς peut certes exprimer une question annonçant une réponse affirmative, comme en Gn 31,15, Am 9,7 et Jer 3,4, où elle traduit l'hébreu כִּי־כֵן<sup>(12)</sup>, mais elle n'est alors jamais suivie de οὕτως καί. Rm 5,16ab pourrait à la rigueur être rendu par une interrogation impliquant une réponse positive: «Et est-ce que le don gratuit (τὸ δῶρημα) n'est pas comme...?». Mais à quoi est-il semblable? Car Paul a omis le substantif dont τὸ δῶρημα est le pendant. Or, si l'on restitue un quelconque synonyme, la phrase n'a plus de sens; que voudrait dire en effet: «Et l'œuvre de grâce (venant de Dieu) n'est-elle pas comme le don (advenu) par un seul homme ayant péché?» Ce qui advint par le péché d'un seul, ce fut la condamnation, le malheur et l'esclavage, la mort, et assurément pas la grâce ou son équivalent. Mais s'il en est ainsi, la réponse à la question ne peut plus être positive, et, à dire vrai, il ne peut même plus s'agir d'une question, simplement d'une négation forte: «Et pas comme (ce qui est advenu) par un seul homme ayant péché, le don gratuit (offert par Dieu)!»

Au niveau sémantique l'interprétation de Porter se voit aussi infirmée. Car, en ces vv. 15-17, les différences l'emportent sur les ressemblances. Déjà en 15cd, les parallélismes sont asymétriques; en regard du «par la chute d'un seul, tous moururent», le lecteur attend une phrase du genre «par l'obéissance d'un seul, tous vivront». Mais, comme le montre une disposition en colonnes, Paul veut souligner que la grâce divine est sans équivalent, qu'elle ne saurait être mise en parallèle à la chute humaine:

εἰ γὰρ	πολλῶ μάλλον
	ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ
τῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς παραπτώματι	ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου
οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον	εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐπερίσσευσεν

(12) En Am 9,7 l'interrogatif כִּי־כֵן est suivi de la conjonction ׀.

Et l'argument *a fortiori* souligne la différence, l'excès du don: il n'y a aucune commune mesure entre la mort universelle, résultat de la faute d'un seul, et ce que Dieu a accordé à tous en Jésus Christ. Le v. 16 souligne aussi l'asymétrie des points de départ<sup>(13)</sup>:

τὸ μὲν γὰρ κρίμα ἐξ ἑνὸς	εἰς κατάκριμα
τὸ δὲ χάρισμα ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων	εἰς δικαίωμα.

Le parallèle «à partir de ... en vue de» est rompu au niveau de l'origine; pour le second stique, on attendrait «à partir d'un seul (homme)». L'œuvre gracieuse part au contraire de *la multitude des chutes*. Cette rupture de parallélisme vise à faire comprendre ce qu'est le don gratuit: Dieu n'a pas attendu la transformation pour déclarer juste quiconque se serait transformé, mais il l'a provoquée et effectuée; il est venu chercher les humains là où ils étaient, dans leurs péchés. La grâce divine est ainsi bien décrite comme initiative et action gratuite — non motivée par un agir appelant une récompense — étendue à tous sans exception. Au v. 17, l'asymétrie entre les conséquences est encore plus forte:

17b	la mort	a régné	par le seul	(Adam),
17e	dans la vie	ils régneront	par le seul	Jésus Christ.

En 17e, on attendrait «la vie a régné (ou régnera) par le seul Jésus Christ», mais Paul dit: «ils régneront dans la vie par le seul Jésus Christ», car la grâce ou la vie ne remplacent pas la mort comme un tyran en renverse un autre et continue d'opprimer ses sujets; la disparition du tyran (la mort) a redonné vie et liberté, pouvoir donc, à tous! Telle est la différence: Dieu veut associer et associe les humains à son pouvoir, à sa gloire<sup>(14)</sup>.

En ces versets, la *synkrisis* est éminemment paradoxale: Paul commence par nier qu'on puisse comparer le prôton et l'eschaton — «mais pas comme la chute, le don de la grâce» (v. 15) —, et lorsque le v. 18 semble amorcer la comparaison («de même que..., de même»), c'est en réalité pour formuler des oppositions fortes. L'étape négative initiale (vv. 15-17) a pour fonction d'indiquer que la chute

<sup>(13)</sup> Certains commentateurs voient au v. 16 une allusion au serviteur de YHWH d'Isaïe: Rom 5,16 τὸ δὲ χάρισμα ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων εἰς δικαίωμα, Is 53,12 αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνῆνεγκεν. C'est possible mais indémontrable, car l'appui lexical est inexistant.

<sup>(14)</sup> Cf. P. LANGSFELD, *Adam und Christus* (Essen 1965) 87.

(ou la faute) d'Adam ne détermine ni la mesure ni le mode avec lequel la grâce a été donnée<sup>(15)</sup>. En d'autres termes, l'agir salvifique n'est pas simplement une réaction contraire à la désobéissance humaine; il s'agit bien d'une initiative totalement gratuite, qui déborde les schémas de la justice rétributive. Bref, la comparaison positive que Porter croit discerner aux vv. 15-16 est infirmée par les glissements sémantiques du passage, car la situation (les effets) qui résulte de l'événement Christ est opposée à la précédente par son excès même.

On peut ainsi dire que la progression des vv. 15-21 est conceptuelle et logique, et que les autres types de composition lui sont subordonnés; pas plus que le v. 19 n'est séparable du v. 18, qu'il reprend et modifie<sup>(16)</sup>, les vv. 20-21 ne sont une simple reprise du thème des vv. 13-14, car la progression dont ils témoignent reste interne à la *synkrisis* des v. 15 et suivants. Nous verrons pourquoi. Mais les vv. 15-21 forment-ils une véritable unité avec les vv. 12-14 — qui, comme l'indique l'appellation *anacoluthé*, sont «sans suite», les vv. 15-21 ne leur étant pas directement reliés — et, si oui, comment décrire leur articulation?

## II. Les versets 12-14 et leur fonction

Pour répondre à la question formulée plus haut, il importe de se prononcer sur le sens de deux passages encore très discutés, la subordonnée ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον et l'incise des vv. 13-14. Et comme ces deux versets forment ce que la rhétorique nomme une *expolitio*, c'est-à-dire une explication ou une explication du v. 12, il semble plus opportun de commencer par eux.

### 1. L'*expolitio* (vv. 13-14)

ἄχρι γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία ἦν ἐν κόσμῳ: ἁμαρτία δὲ οὐκ ἐλλογεῖται μὴ ὄντος νόμου, <sup>14</sup> ἀλλὰ ἐβασίλευσεν ὁ θάνατος ἀπὸ Ἀδάμ μέχρι Μωϋσέως καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς μὴ ἁμαρτήσαντας ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοιώματι τῆς παραβάσεως Ἀδάμ ὃς ἐστὶν τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος.

Que ces versets soient une *expolitio* en bonne et due forme, supposons-le admis<sup>(17)</sup>, même si sa formulation n'est pas en tous points

<sup>(15)</sup> Cf. LANGSFELD, *Adam und Christus*, 81-82.

<sup>(16)</sup> Contre Lamarche-Le Dû (cf. note 1).

<sup>(17)</sup> Cette *expolitio* est certainement une *parenthèse qualifiante*, comme le dit C.H. GIBLIN, «A Qualifying Parenthesis (Rm 5:13-14) and Its

claire et rend son statut quelque peu paradoxal, celui d'une *expolitio* qui a besoin d'être elle-même expliquée! Mais plus que le sens des différentes expressions, il importe de déterminer quelle affirmation du v. 12 Paul veut préciser. Cherche-t-il à rappeler qu'il y a pu y avoir péché en l'absence de loi<sup>(18)</sup>, ou, plutôt, le fait troublant qu'avant la loi mosaïque, alors que les péchés commis ne pouvaient être imputés, et donc entraîner une sentence de mort, tous les humains sont néanmoins morts? Il n'entend certainement pas dire qu'avant l'apparition de la loi mosaïque les humains ne péchaient pas, car cela irait contre les récits bibliques eux-mêmes<sup>(19)</sup>. Mais, ces péchés n'étaient-ils pas eux aussi des transgressions de la volonté divine, de la Torah, comme le disent certains écrits juifs paratestamentaires? Gn 19,15 LXX ne traduit-il pas d'ailleurs de manière symptomatique l'hébreu *יָצַח* par ἀνομίαι, c'est-à-dire en référence à la loi, νόμος, qu'elle soit noachique<sup>(20)</sup>, mosaïque ou autre? Quoi qu'il en soit, la dernière phrase de l'*expolitio*<sup>(21)</sup> insiste sur le fait que même les amis de Dieu, tels les patriarches Abraham et Isaac, qui n'ont pas transgressé un interdit méritant la mort, ont néanmoins été, comme tous les autres humains, victimes des conséquences de la faute d'Adam<sup>(22)</sup>. Si, sans la loi ou

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Context», *To Touch the Text* (FS. J. Fitzmyer [eds. M. P. HORGAN–P. J. KOBELSKI]) New York 1989) 305-315.

<sup>(18)</sup> Cf. U. VANNI, «ὁμοίωμα in Paolo», *Greg* 58 (1977) 321-345 et 431-470, pour qui l'incise des vv. 13-14 répond à une possible objection: comment peut-on pécher s'il n'y a pas de loi — le péché n'est-il pas toujours désobéissance à la volonté ou loi divine? Est-il besoin d'ajouter que Rm 2,12 a déjà mentionné le cas de ceux qui pèchent sans être sous la loi (mosaïque), ce qui n'a pas semblé faire question alors.

<sup>(19)</sup> Cf. Gn 4,7; 6,5.11; 15,16; 18,20; etc.

<sup>(20)</sup> Cf. Gn 9,1-7.

<sup>(21)</sup> «La mort régna depuis Adam jusqu'à Moïse aussi [ou «même»] sur ceux qui n'avaient pas péché d'une manière semblable à (lit: 'selon la ressemblance de') la transgression d'Adam», qui, elle, devait être punie de mort. Que Paul fasse ou non allusion à la loi noachique de Gn 9,6 n'a pas grande importance; ce qu'il souligne c'est que, même si les péchés (y compris les transgressions) n'étaient pas punissables d'une sanction mortelle, la mort était déjà à l'horizon de toute existence humaine.

<sup>(22)</sup> Si pour Adam, Paul parle de παράβασις, pour les générations suivantes, il emploie le verbe générique ἁμαρτάνω (vv. 12d.14b). Ne pas oublier que Rm 4,15 mentionne explicitement le rapport loi/transgression: οὐδὲ δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος οὐδὲ παράβασις. Le problème n'est donc pas: y a-t-il péché sans loi?, mais: s'il n'y a pas eu transgression (d'une loi ou) d'un interdit grave, pourquoi y a-t-il eu mort? Au v. 14, VANNI, «ὁμοίωμα in Paolo», 444-445, sépare ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοιώματι... de ἐπὶ τοῦς μὴ ἁμαρτή-

l'interdit<sup>(23)</sup>, le péché ne peut être transgression, imputé donc<sup>(24)</sup>, et la sanction de mort prononcée, comment expliquer que, surtout s'ils étaient amis de Dieu, les humains ayant vécu avant la promulgation de cette loi soient morts? Cela vient, déclare l'apôtre (Rm 5,14a), de ce qu'ils se trouvaient déjà en une situation où la mort était le lot commun, à cause de la transgression même d'Adam. Car, depuis cette transgression, la mort est une sanction<sup>(25)</sup>. Les difficultés de détail n'empêchent donc pas de saisir la pointe de l'incise: le règne de la mort précède les péchés des fils d'Adam, ou encore, c'est sur fond de (peine de) mort que tous ont péché.

Et si Paul se croit obligé de mentionner la catégorie des hommes ayant vécu dans la période allant d'Adam à Moïse, c'est parce qu'il entend rappeler que tous les humains de toutes les générations ont été dramatiquement touchés par la transgression d'Adam. Mais, la promulgation de la Loi n'a-t-elle pas eu précisément pour fonction de changer le cours des choses? Nous verrons comment Paul répond aux vv. 20-21.

σαντας, et ne traduit pas, comme la plupart le font, «ceux qui n'avaient pas péché d'une transgression semblable à celle d'Adam», mais: «La morte regnò da Adamo a Mosè anche su coloro (i Giudei) che non avevano peccato (trasgredendo la legge), a causa della (oppure: e ciò si vede nella) espressione percettibile (da essi realizzata storicamente) della trasgressione di Adamo...». Mais en ces vv. 12-14, ce sont les *reversiones* qui dominent, pour exprimer chaque fois un contraste et un glissement de sens: νόμος — ἁμαρτία / ἁμαρτία — νόμος au v. 13, ἐπί + datif + ἁμαρτάνω au v. 12d (ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον) / ἁμαρτάνω + ἐπί + datif au v. 14 (τοὺς μὴ ἁμαρτήσαντας ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοιώματι).

(<sup>23</sup>) Mentionnons pour mémoire l'interprétation de J. C. POIRIER, «Romans 5:13-14 and the Universality of Law», *NT* 38 (1996) 344-357, selon qui au v. 14 les hommes d'avant la loi sont morts à cause de *leurs propres* péchés et non des suites de celui d'Adam, car: «Tout péché mène à la mort et toute mort vient du péché». Cet auteur interprète évidemment l'*expositio* à contre-courant; selon lui, Paul raisonne ainsi: la mort présuppose le péché (cf. Rm 5,12 et 6,23), et le péché la loi, et puisque la mort a régné d'Adam à Moïse, c'est que tous depuis Adam ont péché et ont été eux aussi sous la loi divine — tout comme les Juifs le sont actuellement (cf. p. 352). Comme on va le montrer, cette hypothèse doit être écartée.

(<sup>24</sup>) Paul parle évidemment de la loi *divine*, en sa promulgation mosaïque, et non des lois humaines, même si ces dernières fixent aussi la gravité de l'agir et les sanctions (mortelles, lorsqu'il y a lieu) relatives aux transgressions. Les commentaires font remarquer à cet égard que Paul semble ignorer la loi noachique de Gn 9,1-7. Voir ci-dessus la note 20.

(<sup>25</sup>) Cf. Gn 3,17-19, interprété ainsi, bien avant Paul et le judaïsme de son temps.

Si l'*expolitio* renvoie à ce qui précède (v. 12), pour en préciser et souligner la portée, n'a-t-elle aucune autre fonction, par rapport aux versets subséquents cette fois? Certes, l'anacoluthie marque une rupture dans le fil du discours, au sens où les propositions du v. 12 qui décrivent la situation négative (par un seul homme, le péché et la mort dans le monde) n'ont pas leur pendant positif (par un seul homme, la grâce et la vie régneront). Néanmoins, la relative du v. 14 — (Ἀδάμ) ὃς ἐστὶν τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος — annonce la comparaison ou *synkrisis* des vv. 15-19, entre Adam et Christ et entre les conséquences respectives de leur agir<sup>(26)</sup>. Car ce terme τύπος n'implique pas une similitude totale, il ouvre au contraire à la fois aux ressemblances et aux différences.

Les vv. 12-14 sont ainsi développés par les suivants. Le v. 12 sera repris par toutes les affirmations qui correspondent à la colonne de gauche du tableau 1. Comme on peut facilement le constater, plusieurs expressions sont répétées presque telles quelles<sup>(27)</sup>:

v. 12	vv. 15-21
ὥσπερ δι' ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν	19 ὥσπερ γὰρ διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἁμαρτολοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοί.
εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διῆλθεν	15 εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἑνὸς παραπτώματι οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον. 17 εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἑνὸς παραπτώματι ὁ θάνατος ἐβασίλευσεν διὰ τοῦ ἑνός.

(<sup>26</sup>) Si le génitif τοῦ μέλλοντος ne désigne pas le dernier Adam, Jésus Christ mais, comme le suggère D. DIJU-DUVAL, «La tradizione di Rm 5,12-14», *RivBib* 38 (1990) 353-373, l'histoire qui doit se dérouler après Adam, la phrase doit alors être comprise ainsi: par son destin, Adam est type de ce qui — l'histoire ou la situation (le genre de τοῦ μέλλοντος est alors neutre) — vient après lui, situation de mort universelle. Cette interprétation, qui est en accord avec le reste de l'incise, est malgré tout peu probable, car le participe μέλλων étant utilisé seul, il est plus indiqué de restituer le substantif qui précède, à savoir Adam (on traduira donc: «l'Adam à venir» ou «l'Adam qui devait venir»). Pour désigner le temps ou les choses à venir, les lettres pauliniennes utilisent soit le pluriel (τῶν μελλόντων, Col 2,17), soit le singulier, avec un substantif (ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι μέλλοντι, Ep 1,21). En outre, la *synkrisis* qui suit, entre Adam et Jésus Christ, indique bien que τοῦ μέλλοντος désigne l'Adam eschatologique.

(<sup>27</sup>) Le contenu du v. 12 n'est pas repris seulement à partir du v. 19, mais par la *synkrisis* en son entier.



Malgré l'anacoluthie, le lien entre les vv. 12-14 et les suivants est donc étroit. Ceci dit, la composition de l'ensemble doit encore être mise à jour. L'analyse du v. 12d va permettre de percevoir le mouvement de la réflexion de l'apôtre.

## 2. *L'interprétation du ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον* (v. 12d)

Διὰ τοῦτο ὥσπερ δι' ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος, καὶ οὕτως εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διήλθεν, ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον.

Le récent commentaire de J. Fitzmyer ayant fait une histoire exhaustive de l'interprétation de la proposition introduite par ἐφ' ᾧ, on ne peut qu'y renvoyer<sup>(28)</sup>. La gamme des interprétations peut être divisée en deux:

- ceux qui lisent le ἐφ' ᾧ... comme une proposition *relative*, renvoyant à une personne, Adam («in whom», «because of whom», «because of the one by whom», «after whom»), ou à une situation («to the extent that all have sinned», «because of which» ou «on the grounds of which», «toward which», «on the basis of what law [all sinned]», «on the basis of which» ou «under which circumstances») (29).

- ceux qui, très nombreux aujourd'hui, y voient une proposition *subordonnée*, causale ou consécutive. Le sens causal a été perçu avec diverses nuances: «since», «because», «inasmuch as» (ἐφ' ᾧ équivaldrait ainsi à l'hébreu  $\text{כִּי לִי}$  ou au grec διότι)<sup>(30)</sup>, «in view of the fact that», «on condition that». Tout dernièrement, J. A. Fitzmyer a suggéré de lire le passage comme une consécutive: «Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death came through sin; so death spread to all human beings, with the result that all have sinned».

Parmi toutes ces propositions de traduction du v. 12d, quatre ont eu ou ont encore la faveur des exégètes. Il suffira de les présenter

(28) J. A. FITZMYER, *Romans* (AB 33; New York 1993) 413-417, qui résume très bien son article «ΕΦ' Ω in Romans 5.12», *NTS* 39 (1993) 321-339.

(29) Fitzmyer retient à juste titre ce dernier sens comme le meilleur de cette série, parce qu'on le rencontre aussi dans les parallèles extrabibliques.

(30) Le  $\text{כִּי לִי}$  peut (doit?) aussi être interprété comme une conclusion: «Voilà pourquoi, tous ont péché»; cf. F. MONTAGNINI, *Rom 5,12-14 alla luce del dialogo rabbinico* (Brescia 1971) 57-67.

et commenter brièvement, car c'est l'ensemble des données qui va en réalité permettre de choisir la plus fiable:

- « ...et ainsi la mort passa à tous les hommes,  
 (a) cet Adam en qui (ou «à cause de qui») tous péchèrent [relative]  
 (b) situation dans laquelle (= sur la base de quoi) tous péchèrent [relative]  
 (c) étant donné que (ou «du fait que») tous péchèrent [causale]  
 (d) avec pour résultat que tous péchèrent [consécutive]  
 ... <sup>13</sup> Car, jusqu'à la loi, le péché était dans le monde, mais le péché n'est pas imputé, s'il n'y a pas de loi; <sup>14</sup> mais la mort régna depuis Adam jusqu'à Moïse aussi sur ceux qui n'avaient pas péché d'une manière semblable à la transgression d'Adam ».

L'interprétation (a), fameuse et très suivie depuis S. Augustin, est sans doute la moins fondée grammaticalement, à cause de l'éloignement de l'antécédent («un seul homme» en 12a).

L'interprétation (b) est pleinement conforme au contexte, c'est-à-dire à l'explication qui suit immédiatement et à l'opposition Adam/Christ des vv. 15-19. Si l'*expositio* des vv. 13-14 insiste sur le fait que la mort a englouti tous les humains sans exception, *quels qu'aient été leurs péchés*, le v. 12d ne peut qu'énoncer inchoativement le rapport entre les péchés de tous et le règne de la mort.

Avec l'interprétation (c), la plus en vogue aujourd'hui, la responsabilité unique d'Adam mentionnée au v. 12ab serait estompée, voire supprimée, et l'opposition des vv. 15-19 n'aurait plus de sens — Fitzmyer a bien raison de la refuser vigoureusement, et nous ajouterons nos propres arguments plus loin. De plus, si Paul dit que la mort a atteint tous les hommes puisque tous ont péché, l'incise des vv. 13-14 perdrait sa fonction, car elle explique en sens contraire (nonobstant le fait que les péchés ne pouvaient être accrédités, la mort a régné) le rapport entre l'extension universelle de la mort et les péchés individuels.

La solution (d) doit évidemment supposer que la mort dont parle Paul n'est pas (seulement ou d'abord) physique (sinon ce serait le fait de mourir qui serait la cause des péchés individuels, et personne n'a jamais soutenu cela — Paul pas davantage), mais morale et spirituelle; cela revient à dire que le monde était en état de décomposition morale, et que résultat en a été l'émergence des péchés individuels. Mais comment le monde pourrait-il être en état de totale décomposition morale sans les péchés commis par les in-

dividus? De plus, pour être valide, cette interprétation doit admettre que le ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον ne dépend pas de la proposition καὶ οὕτως.. ὁ θάνατος διήλθεν, mais des deux propositions précédentes (venue du péché et de la mort *et* mort étendue à tous); sinon, Paul ferait du péché de tous l'effet de la mort (physique et spirituelle), ce qui ne va pas avec l'incise des vv. 13-14, où il insiste sur un autre point! Au demeurant, l'*expolitio* des vv.13-14 ne cherche pas à rendre raison d'une conséquence mais d'une situation universelle à laquelle aucune période de l'histoire n'a pu échapper.

L'interprétation du v. 12d doit ainsi respecter le contexte, en particulier l'*expolitio* des vv.13-14. Comme ailleurs en Rm, Paul procède par précisions successives; il commence par des affirmations sibyllines, qu'il explique progressivement, et il importe de tenir compte de la logique de sa démonstration pour comprendre chaque affirmation — ici, le v. 12d. Voilà pourquoi l'interprétation (b) est préférable. D'autres raisons vont appuyer ce choix.

En premier lieu la progression des vv.15-21. De fait, du côté négatif ou adamique (colonne de gauche du tableau 1), Paul mentionne le règne de la mort (vv.15-17) *avant* la condition pécheresse de l'humanité (vv.18-19) et la promulgation de la loi (v. 20), confirmant que c'est sur un fond de mort que les hommes issus d'Adam ont été constitués pécheurs. Le parallélisme entre les deux mouvements, manifeste et pourtant ignoré des commentaires, vaut d'être souligné:

	vv. 12-14	vv. 15-21
péché d'un seul	v. 12a	v. 15b...
règne de la mort	v. 12b	vv. 15-17
tous péchèrent/sont pécheurs	v. 12c	vv. 18-19
la loi mosaïque et sa fonction	v. 13	v. 20

La fonction des vv. 12-14 — en particulier l'*expolitio* des vv.13-14 — n'en est que plus claire: ils nomment les différentes composantes négatives et mettent en place leur apparition dans le temps; de la sorte, en 15-21, Paul va pouvoir leur opposer l'œuvre de grâce advenue par la médiation du Christ. Les vv.12-14 énoncent donc de façon brève et générique ce que les vv. 15-20 vont développer et accentuer, comme le montre la colonne de gauche du tableau 1, en particulier deux points:

(a) la situation pécheresse de l'humanité. En effet, les vv. 12-14 disent seulement que tous les humains ont péché, mais les vv. 18-19 vont plus loin, car tous y sont déclarés *pécheurs* (ἁμαρτωλοί), c'est-à-dire ennemis de Dieu et passibles de sa colère, par la transgression du seul Adam. Cette affirmation rejoint celles de Rm 5,8 et de Rm 3<sup>(31)</sup>, et la distinction entre *pécher* et *être pécheur* reflète celle faite par le judaïsme d'alors: si le juif fidèle à la Torah reconnaît son péché, il ne se considère pas pour autant appartenant à la catégorie des pécheurs, de ceux qui vont à leur perte. Manifestement, en Rm 5,15-19, Paul élargit à toute l'humanité — y compris Énoch, Abraham, et tous ceux que la littérature juive considérait comme amis de Dieu — la catégorie des pécheurs<sup>(32)</sup>.

(b) le rôle de la loi dans l'économie du salut. Pour les vv. 12-14, la loi fait du péché une transgression de la volonté divine et elle fixe la sanction correspondant à la gravité de la transgression. Mais, de la loi, Paul ne dit alors ni qu'elle a permis de juguler, au moins de faire régresser le mal et la violence, ni qu'elle a eu un effet contraire; aux vv. 20-21, en revanche, il affirme explicitement qu'elle a partie liée avec le péché, et même qu'elle a été promulguée *pour que* — noter la finalité — le péché prolifère et croisse. Pour Paul, loin de changer la situation de l'humanité, la promulgation de la loi sinaïtique l'a au contraire aggravée. Pareille déclaration, admettons-le, ne peut que faire frémir un juif profondément attaché à la Torah. Au demeurant, la progression du passage montre que les différentes oppositions ont leur pointe ou leur acmé aux vv. 20-21: c'est là que Paul voulait arriver.

Notons en passant combien, de Rm 2 à Rm 5, les affirmations de Paul relatives à la loi mosaïque sont de plus en plus fortes. En Rm 2,12-14, la loi avait son rôle pour la rétribution du juif mais pas pour celle du non juif, qui n'est pas sous ses ordres; eu égard à la rétribution, son rôle était limité. Rm 3,19-20 lui avait reconnu un rôle décisif pour la connaissance du péché, mais avait nié qu'on pût être déclaré juste à partir du bien opéré sur ses injonctions — la loi n'a

<sup>(31)</sup> Cf. J.-N. ALETTI, «Rm 2. Sa cohérence et sa fonction», *Bib* 77 (1996) 153-177.

<sup>(32)</sup> Sur la distinction entre *pécher* et *pécheur* chez Paul et dans le judaïsme paratestamentaire, voir M. WINNINGE, *Sinners and the Righteous. A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters* (Stockholm 1995) 181-212. Que Paul ne cherche pas à s'expliquer sur cette affirmation vient de ce qu'il s'appuie sur la première section de son argumentation, Rm 1-4.

pas de place dans le processus de justification (cf. aussi Rm 3,21-22). Rm 4,15 était allé un peu plus loin: la loi produit la colère, c'est-à-dire le jugement et la punition, dans la mesure où ses ordres sont presque toujours transgressés. Rm 5,20 dit maintenant que la loi mosaïque est intervenue *pour* qu'abonde la chute. N'a-t-elle pas plutôt été promulguée pour que le peuple d'Israël connaisse la volonté de son Dieu et la mette en pratique? Comment Dieu aurait-il pu donner sa loi pour faire proliférer les fautes? Les psalmistes et les traditions juives voient d'ailleurs dans la loi mosaïque une protection contre le mal et la violence. Paul ne peut laisser de tels propos inexpliqués, comme le montre Rm 7,7-25, où sont réexaminés les rapports entre loi et péché.

### III. Rm 5,12-21 et les traditions juives

Pour percevoir l'originalité et la force des propos de Paul, rien n'est plus profitable qu'une lecture, même superficielle, de quelques passages de la littérature juive paratestamentaire, où la responsabilité d'Adam est évoquée.

#### 1. *Le raisonnement des vv. 15-19*

Si Paul est sans doute le premier à opposer comme il le fait Adam et Jésus Christ, on peut se demander s'il n'a pas pris pour modèle une tradition plus ancienne ou contemporaine pour l'adapter à ses fins. Le midrash *Sifra Leviticus* rapporte en effet les propos de Rabbi José, où l'on retrouve les composantes: (a) l'opposition entre deux figures, (b) l'influence d'un seul homme sur tous les autres, sa responsabilité universelle pour le mal ou pour le bien (c) l'argument *a fortiori* («combien plus», «à plus forte raison»), (d) le principe de la supériorité du positif sur le négatif<sup>(33)</sup>:

(33) J'ai traduit (littéralement) le passage, mentionné aussi par Str-B, III, 230, en suivant l'édition hébraïque de Weiss, p. 27 א, parasha יב, § 10 ('). Rabbi José, un tannaïte, a vécu au II<sup>e</sup> siècle.

<i>la question sur l'eschaton</i>	Rabbi José dit: si tu veux savoir (quelle) récompense (sera) donnée aux justes dans le futur,
<i>le retour au prôton: la responsabilité d'Adam dans l'espace et le temps</i>	va et apprends du premier homme (que) il ne lui fut imposé qu'un seul commandement (une seule chose) à ne pas faire, et il a outrepassé; vois combien de morts furent décrétées pour les générations et les générations jusqu'à la fin des générations.
<i>le critère: la comparaison entre rétributions</i>	Car, quelle est la mesure la plus grande, celle de la récompense ou celle de la punition? Réponse: celle de la récompense.
<i>l'application: opposition Adam/juste avec argument a fortiori</i>	Si la mesure de la punition est (plus) petite, à savoir tant de morts décrétées pour lui et les générations des générations jusqu'à la fin des générations, alors celui qui revient de l'abomination et de l'idolâtrie, et qui s'afflige le jour du Kippour, combien plus transmettra-t-il la faveur divine pour lui et pour les générations des générations jusqu'à la fin des générations.

Ce texte, magnifique à bien des égards, est en réalité fondé sur une affirmation indiscutable: la récompense divine dépasse de loin la punition (« Quelle est la mesure la plus grande, celle de la récompense ou celle de la punition? Réponse: celle de la récompense »); cet axiome indique combien les rabbins sont convaincus de la libéralité divine: si le châtiment est proportionné à la faute et suffisamment efficace pour que le pécheur se convertisse ou pâtisse des conséquences de ses fautes, il reste pondéré par la patience et par la connaissance que Dieu a de la fragilité humaine — Dieu ne punit jamais de gaieté de coeur; en revanche, il aime récompenser et le fait avec largesse<sup>(34)</sup>.

Les ressemblances entre la réflexion attribuée à Rabbi José et Rm 5,15-21 sautent aux yeux, eu égard à la libéralité divine, mais aussi à la responsabilité qu'Adam a eue pour la venue de la mort en ce monde. Elles sont d'ailleurs telles qu'on peut s'interroger sur l'histoire de la tradition: les propos de Rabbi José ne font-ils pas indirectement ou obliquement allusion à l'importance unique et décisive

<sup>(34)</sup> Le principe trouve évidemment son fondement en de nombreux passages bibliques (Ex 34,6-7; Ps 103; etc.).

donnée par le christianisme à la figure de Jésus de Nazareth dans l'histoire du salut, pour proposer une alternative qui reste conforme à la foi juive? Sa déclaration ne reflète-t-elle pas plutôt une tradition plus ancienne, contemporaine de Paul ou même antérieure, également connue de lui? À vrai dire, il est très difficile, pour ne pas dire impossible de dater avec exactitude la tradition, certainement ancienne, mentionnée par ce passage. On sait aussi que les différents rédacteurs des midrashim peuvent, comme le font les pseudépigraphes, attribuer à un rabbin ancien et connu des propos qu'ils ont eux-mêmes forgés, mais auxquels ils veulent conférer une réelle autorité. Toutefois, pour ce passage, la datation devrait être ancienne, en tout cas indépendante de la tradition chrétienne, car les propos de R. José ne sont pas sans rappeler ceux des écrits juifs paratestamentaires sur l'intercession des justes et, de plus, ils essaient de répondre à un problème interne au judaïsme, celui des critères à partir desquels se fera la rétribution finale (de ceux ayant obéi à la Torah).

Rm 5,12-21 élimine au contraire la question de la rétribution; on aura sans doute noté que, dans la première colonne du tableau 1, où il est question de la faute d'Adam et de ses conséquences désastreuses, la rétribution divine négative n'est pas mentionnée. Certes, le v. 16 parle de jugement et de condamnation et, s'il est clair que Dieu seul peut en être l'auteur, son nom n'est pas prononcé; car Paul ne veut l'associer qu'à celui de la grâce (v. 15d)! Certes, la technique est la même — en moins net — dans le passage de *Sifra Leviticus* cité plus haut. Mais, la différence vient de ce qu'en Rm 5,15-19, comme cela a déjà été noté plus haut, l'agir salvifique de Dieu n'est pas la réponse à un comportement humain positif, la rétribution (normale ou due) à un agir obéissant ou aimant, mais une initiative totalement gratuite, qui part de la multitude des fautes et des péchés, et vient chercher l'humanité dans l'ombre de la mort. Assurément, dans le même passage, Paul ajoute que c'est l'obéissance (et donc les mérites) d'un homme, Jésus Christ, qui nous a obtenu la justification et la surabondance de grâce (vv. 17.18.19). Mais, la première partie de la *synkrisis* (vv. 15-17) a précisément pour but d'insister sur la totale gratuité de l'œuvre divine de justification; de la sorte, l'obéissance du Christ n'est pas ce qui la provoque ou la produit, elle en est bien plutôt la manifestation, elle aussi gratuite.

## 2. Le rôle d'Adam

Les différences de perspective entre la problématique juive et celle de Paul ne suppriment évidemment pas les ressemblances, en particulier à propos d'Adam<sup>(35)</sup>. Tout comme Paul, les livres paratextamentaires et rabbiniques sont plus intéressés par les effets de son péché que par sa stature personnelle. Les textes ne manquent pas, qui soulignent le rôle décisif joué par sa désobéissance pour l'extension de la mort et la corruption du monde, même si ici ou là son influence est minimisée<sup>(36)</sup>.

Les passages soulignant le lien entre la désobéissance d'Adam et la propagation de la mort dans le monde sont nombreux, des deutérocanoniques (Si 25,24) aux apocryphes<sup>(37)</sup> et aux midrashim<sup>(38)</sup>. Certes, en certains livres, la mort ne vient pas d'Adam, mais d'instances supérieures, comme le Diable (Sg 2,24)<sup>(39)</sup>, dont l'envie a causé l'entrée de la mort dans le monde, ou les anges, dont le péché revêt une grande importance dans le livre des veilleurs (1 En 6-36)<sup>(40)</sup>. Mais ces passages ne contredisent pas les autres, ils vont seulement plus loin dans l'attribution des causes. Au demeurant, en Rm 5, Paul ne dit pas qu'Adam est à l'origine du péché, mais seulement que par sa désobéissance le péché *est entré dans le monde*, car il

(35) Sur le rôle d'Adam, les traditions juives sont plus complémentaires que contradictoires. Cf. Str-B III, 227-228; R. SCROGGS, *The Last Adam. A Study in Pauline Anthropology* (Philadelphia 1966) chap. II pour les livres paratextamentaires et chap. III pour les écrits rabbiniques. En Si 25,24, la responsabilité du péché est donnée à Ève, comme en 2 Co 11,3; 1Tim 2,14.

(36) En l'un ou l'autre texte la responsabilité d'Adam est minimisée; cf. 2 Ba 54,15.19: «Chacun de nous est à lui-même son propre Adam».

(37) Cf. 4 Esd 3,7; 7,116-126; 2 Ba 17,1-4; 19,8; 23,4; 48,43 (texte intéressant, car il mentionne aussi Ève); 2 Ba 54,15; 56,5-6.

(38) Cf. entre autres, le texte de *Sifra Leviticus* cité plus haut.

(39) Les commentaires notent les ressemblances lexicales existant entre Rm 5,12 et Sg 2,24: Sg 2,24 φθόνῳ δὲ διαβόλου θάνατος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον, Rm 5,12: δι' ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος. Les parallèles peuvent s'expliquer soit par dépendance de Rm 5, soit par la reprise d'une tradition commune exploitée différemment. La seconde hypothèse semble plus probable — on ne peut guère en dire plus.

(40) R. Penna insiste beaucoup sur le contraste entre l'explication que donne 1 En 6-36 de la propagation du péché et de la mort et celle de Paul. Cf. R. PENNA, «Apocalittica enochica in s. Paolo: il concetto di peccato», *Apocalittica e origine cristiane*. Atti del V Convegno di Studi Neotestamentari (Ricerche Storico-Bibliche) (ed. R. PENNA) (Bologna 1995) 61-84.



en reste à la *synkrisis* Adam/Christ et aux effets respectifs — mais pas aux causes — de leur agir.

Plusieurs passages signalent également qu'après le péché d'Adam, la situation de l'humanité a dramatiquement changé: avant même de mourir, les humains doivent souffrir de maladies, de tourments, de catastrophes naturelles; ils sont en somme privés de félicité, de gloire, et l'idolâtrie est perçue comme le signe par excellence de cette déréliction<sup>(41)</sup>. Quant à la croissance du péché dans le monde, s'il en est question en l'un ou l'autre livre paratextamentaire, on n'en trouve pratiquement aucun écho dans les *midrashim*<sup>(42)</sup>.

Bref, Rm 5,12-21 n'est pas le seul passage à signaler le rôle décisif d'Adam dans la propagation de la mort et du malheur, pour les générations humaines et pour le reste du monde; sa présentation ne diffère pas substantiellement de celle des écrits juifs du temps, elle en est même très proche, dans sa forme et son contenu.

### 3. *La figure opposée à celle d'Adam*

Tout autant que la figure d'Adam, le judaïsme rabbinique insiste aussi sur la figure grâce à laquelle la situation provoquée par le premier péché est renversée. Et c'est ici que les différences avec Rm 5,12-21 sautent aux yeux.

Si, pour Paul, c'est en Jésus Christ que Dieu crée une humanité nouvelle, la tradition juive a vu la nouveauté surgir avec Abraham ou même avec le peuple de Dieu, Israël, qui seraient l'un et l'autre l'expression de l'humanité réconciliée et de son espérance. C'est ainsi que le *midrash* GenR 14,6 présente Abraham comme le nouvel homme qui a pu réparer le mal occasionné par Adam. Le passage, qui cite une déclaration du livre de Josué (14,15: «le plus grand homme parmi les *Anaqim*»), l'applique au patriarche, et fait ce commentaire<sup>(43)</sup>:

<sup>(41)</sup> Quelques textes bibliques avaient déjà amorcé le sujet; cf. Is 24,5-6; Si 40,1-11 (ce texte est emblématique); Jub 3,28 (qui mentionne le sort subi par les animaux); 2 Ba 56,6.

<sup>(42)</sup> 4 Esd 3,26; 4,30; 7,118. Pour 4 Esd, semble-t-il, Adam est à l'origine de l'inclination mauvaise (לֵצֶר הָרָע) qui habite en chaque homme. Mais pour les rabbins elle ne vient pas de lui mais est inhérente à sa nature: il a été ainsi créé par Dieu, ce qui ne supprime en rien sa liberté, car il peut surmonter la tentation.

<sup>(43)</sup> J'ai essayé de traduire aussi littéralement que possible.

C'est Abraham. Pourquoi est-il appelé «grand»? Parce que digne d'être créé avant Adam, mais le Saint, béni soit son nom, dit [à propos d'Adam]: «il cassera (tout) et il n'y aura personne pour réparer après lui, mais, voici, moi je crée le premier homme, (pour) que, s'il casse (tout), vienne Abraham et répare après lui».

Il faut aussi signaler d'autres passages midrashiques, du plus haut intérêt pour la compréhension que le peuple juif a de son statut et de sa vocation, comme GenR 19,9.2; 24,5.2-3, où cette fois c'est Israël qui est en contrepoint d'Adam: le premier a désobéi à l'injonction divine, le second aime et suit la Torah, par laquelle il a accès à la vie divine — la Torah est l'antidote idéal aux effets du péché d'Adam<sup>(44)</sup>. Il est alors nécessaire d'appartenir au peuple élu pour être justifié, racheté, sauvé.

Il est clair que Paul ne pouvait donner ce rôle qu'au Christ, mort et ressuscité, glorifié, avec qui vient au jour l'humanité nouvelle. Mais, si le judaïsme insiste sur le don inouï qu'est la Torah et sur ses effets bénéfiques pour qui en est le sujet, Paul finit Rm 5,12-21 en signalant son rôle négatif: loin de changer le cours des choses, la loi mosaïque n'a fait que l'aggraver. Outre sa fonction rhétorique, sur laquelle nous reviendrons, l'affirmation de Rm 5,20 sur la loi a pour effet immédiat de mettre en valeur le rôle du Christ, en opposition à celui d'Adam: c'est à cause de ces deux hommes et d'eux seuls — pas de la loi — que le sort de tous les humains s'est joué. Il importe donc d'affronter les rapports entre prôton et eschaton.

#### IV. Le prôton et l'eschaton en Rm 5,12-19

En Rm 5,12-19, on ne peut dire qu'Adam n'ait pas d'importance, puisque sa (son unique) transgression a déterminé le sort de toute l'humanité après lui. Cela implique-t-il que l'eschaton ou l'œuvre de grâce divine en Jésus Christ ne puisse être comprise qu'en référence au prôton?

<sup>(44)</sup> N. T. WRIGHT, «Adam in Pauline Christology», SBL Seminar Papers 1983, 359-389; on trouvera une traduction de GenR 19:9.2; 24:5.2-3 en J. NEUSNER, «Was Rabbinic Judaism 'Ethnic'?» *CBQ* 57 (1995) 281-305 (les textes se trouvent aux p. 290-294).

### 1. L'importance du prôton dans l'argumentation

Le passage décrit la responsabilité d'Adam sans aucun doute avec plus de force que tous les textes juifs mentionnés plus haut, puisque la transgression du premier homme fait que tous depuis lors ne souffrent pas seulement violence, pèchent et meurent, mais sont aussi fondamentalement pécheurs (ἁμαρτωλοί) voués à la perdition. Car, on le sait, le substantif ἁμαρτωλός ne désigne pas quiconque commet un ou des péchés, mais un statut, selon les catégories du judaïsme de l'époque, celui de tous ceux qui sont ennemis de Dieu, parce qu'ils ne veulent pas le reconnaître et/ou parce qu'ils ne veulent pas faire sa volonté. C'est cette même humanité pécheresse que Rm 3 déclarait passible de la colère divine.

L'importance accordée à Adam en Rm 5 vient de ce que l'apôtre passe sous silence les causes lointaines du péché, qu'il s'agisse de l'envie du diable ou de la rébellion des anges; il ne mentionne pas davantage les ruses de la tentation et la fragilité des humains qui pèchent le plus souvent en se laissant abuser par leur désir. Les circonstances atténuantes de la faute — qui pourraient faire remonter à qui a trompé et tenté le premier homme — n'ont ici aucune place.

### 2. Adam et le Christ

Mais, en retour et paradoxalement, Paul passe aussi sous silence l'objet de la transgression et sa gravité. Certes, ses effets — mort, etc. — laissent entendre que le délit put/dut être sérieux. Rien n'en est cependant dit. Seul compte le fait qu'il y ait eu transgression et que ses conséquences aient été ce qu'elles sont: l'insistance de Paul ne porte pas d'abord sur le péché des origines — qui n'intéresse pas davantage le judaïsme paratestamentaire —, mais sur le fait que *tous sans exception* ont été pris dans la spirale d'une mort et d'un péché qui engluent notre monde: non seulement les humains qui ont précédé la promulgation de la loi mosaïque, mais aussi tous ceux qui ont vécu depuis — y compris les sujets de cette loi mosaïque.

On peut même paradoxalement dire — sans contredire nos affirmations antérieures — que le rôle d'Adam est minimisé. La présentation des vv. 15-19 a montré que les asymétries visent à mettre en valeur non l'œuvre d'Adam, mais celle de Dieu, qui n'est pas décrite comme un retour à la case de départ: il s'agit d'une totale et gratuite surabondance. La *synkrisis* commence par deux négations

décisives pour l'interprétation. Les données bibliques, reprises et systématisées à propos d'Adam et des conséquences de la chute, servent de faire valoir à la grâce et au don reçus en Jésus Christ: les ruptures de la *synkrisis* et l'accumulation des termes grecs exprimant gratuité et don (*grâce, don gracieux, don, acte de donner* — neuf fois en 5,15-21) sont symptomatiques à cet égard. Si Adam a de l'importance, c'est pour l'apparition de la mort et de la situation malheureuse dans laquelle le monde fut plongé, mais il ne détermine en rien l'œuvre de grâce, qui n'est ni une réponse — totalement gracieuse et venue d'une initiative divine inouïe —, ni un agir proportionné à la faute, mais bien plutôt pur excès<sup>(45)</sup>.

La répétition vise d'autre part non à mettre Adam en relief, mais à faire percevoir ce que l'on obtiendra en Christ. Si par un homme (dont on ne sait par ailleurs rien), l'humanité a connu de tels déboires, *a fortiori* nous pouvons imaginer ce que Dieu nous réserve désormais comme trésors de grâce en Jésus Christ (dont les lecteurs de Rm savent qu'il est le Fils même de Dieu). L'insistance de l'apôtre vise à faire comprendre que le prôton ne peut être la mesure de l'économie du salut voulu par Dieu. C'est l'extrême de l'œuvre de rédemption qui permet de peser en quelque sorte les péchés, et de déclarer qu'il n'y a aucune commune mesure entre ce qui nous est désormais gracieusement accordé en/par Jésus Christ et ce qu'a déclenché la transgression d'Adam.

En définitive, si la mention du prôton est essentielle, c'est au niveau rhétorique. Paul part en effet d'un fait supposé connu de tous: de même que vous admettez qu'un homme (quel qu'il ait été) ait pu «tout casser» comme dit GenR 14,6, *a fortiori* vous pouvez comprendre, parce que vous en faites déjà l'expérience, qu'en Jésus Christ Dieu ait voulu tout nous donner et nous ait tout donné. La comparaison ne fait pas ici d'Adam le point de référence — en négatif — de l'agir du Christ, le modèle inversé de sa stature, mais le point de départ indicatif, le tremplin qui permet de parler de l'œuvre du Christ, et qui fait entrevoir ou mieux comprendre l'inouï, comme les paraboles évangéliques<sup>(46)</sup>.

<sup>(45)</sup> Avec la majorité des exégètes, il faut relever la technique de l'*amplification* à l'œuvre dans les vv. 15-21.

<sup>(46)</sup> S. Lyonnet a développé cet aspect dans S. LYONNET, «La Problématique du péché originel dans le Nouveau Testament», *Le mythe et la peine* (éd. E. CASTELLI) (Paris 1967) 101-120, repris in S. LYONNET, *Études sur l'épître aux Romains* (Rome 1989) en particulier 181-184. Il lui semble aussi

### 3. *L'unicité du premier Adam*

Assurément Paul insiste sur l'unicité d'Adam. À la différence des traditions juives, il donne sensiblement plus de relief à l'unicité du premier pécheur; appliqué à Adam, le «un seul» est répété 7 fois:

v. 12	par un seul homme		
v. 15	par la chute d'un seul		
v. 16	par un seul ayant péché à partir d'un seul		
v. 17	par la chute d'un seul	v. 17	par le seul Jésus Christ
v. 18	par la chute d'un seul	v. 18	par le juste agir d'un seul
v. 19	par la désobéissance d'un seul homme	v. 19	par l'obéissance d'un seul

L'Adam pécheur fut-il donc seul? Paul a-t-il oublié Ève<sup>(47)</sup>? S'il reprend manifestement les données bibliques de Gn 2-3, il les simplifie à l'extrême. L'unicité du premier homme est-elle essentielle à l'argumentation? Et quelle est sa fonction?

Avant d'opposer Adam et le Christ (aux vv. 17-19), Paul place, en regard de l'unicité de la faute d'Adam, ses effets sur toute l'humanité; la répétition majeure des vv. 12.15-16 est bien celle-ci: «par la faute d'un seul homme, tous les hommes sont morts et ont été condamnés». Si Paul pointe sur l'unicité du premier homme, c'est donc d'abord pour mettre en valeur les effets universels de son agir: tous, sans exception, comme le répète l'*expolitio*, ont été asservis au pouvoir mortifère du péché. L'unicité n'est qu'un tremplin. Mais si c'est le contraste un/tous qui est ainsi mis en valeur, il n'est aucunement expliqué. Qu'un seul homme ait pu entraîner toute l'humanité

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que la référence à Adam serait «un argument *ad hominem* à l'adresse de ses adversaires juifs ou judéo-chrétiens pour leur montrer que, dans le plan divin de salut, le rôle, à première vue exorbitant, que la religion chrétienne attribuait au Christ, et notamment tel que Paul le soulignait, n'était pas aussi invraisemblable que des esprits accoutumés à une autre conception du salut et de la justification pouvaient le penser» (p. 181). Les midrashim cités plus haut montrent que le rôle attribué au Christ a des parallèles dans le judaïsme et que ce n'est pas à ce niveau que se manifeste la différence paulinienne, mais bien sur la rôle de la loi mosaïque.

(47) Très tôt, la typologie Adam/Christ a été étendue à Ève et Marie, comme le montre un passage d'IRÉNÉE DE LYON, *Démonstration de la prédication apostolique*, 33: «Il fallait... qu'une vierge en se faisant l'avocate d'une vierge détruisit la désobéissance d'une vierge par l'obéissance d'une vierge».

dans une catastrophe dont les conséquences sont temporellement indéfinies, et pourquoi il en est ainsi, cela est supposé connu et admis. Car la pointe est ailleurs (vv. 20-21).

Il y a encore d'autres indices qui nous autorisent à dire que la valeur des conclusions sotériologiques n'est pas fondamentalement basée sur l'unicité du prôton. Rappelons en effet qu'aux vv. 15-17 l'œuvre de Dieu n'est pas conditionnée par la transgression du seul Adam, puisqu'au v. 16d, elle part de la multitude des péchés, de la situation désespérée de l'humanité entière: Dieu prend *tous* les péchés et les pardonne gracieusement. L'asymétrie du verset a son importance; elle indique clairement que le salut et le rassemblement de toute l'humanité par/en Jésus Christ n'est pas déterminée par l'unicité d'Adam, mais par le désir que Dieu a de rassembler tous les hommes pour leur faire partager sa gloire. L'unité du sort de tous ne dépend pas de l'unicité du prôton, mais de ce qu'il leur a été donné de recevoir par Jésus Christ.

L'unicité d'Adam a son importance, puisqu'elle est répétée, mais, si dans un premier temps elle a pour fonction de mettre en valeur les effets disproportionnés de son agir — tous meurent et deviennent pécheurs —, dans un second temps, elle met en relief la figure du Christ et les effets de son obéissance. Et le raisonnement de Paul s'appuie seulement sur les données traditionnelles: si, comme le dit l'Écriture, par le péché d'un seul homme — dont la stature est délibérément tue — la situation de tous fut telle, comment ne pas admettre que par le Christ — dont la stature est connue des croyants auxquels il s'adresse — le sort de tous sera changé? Au demeurant, l'unicité du prôton est ici dépendante de celle du Christ, elle ne la détermine pas: parce que Christ est unique, parce qu'en lui l'œuvre gracieuse de Dieu a atteint son excès, son extrême περισσόν (cf. v. 20), Paul peut réduire le prôton à l'unicité, *pour qu'au seul Christ corresponde le seul Adam*. La finale de l'*expolitio* (v. 14d) confirme indiscutablement cette hypothèse: Paul a repensé Adam en termes typologiques, il a relu le prôton à partir de l'événement Christ.

L'insistance de l'apôtre sur le «un seul» ne se comprend donc qu'à partir de ce qu'il connaît de la vocation de l'humanité en Jésus Christ. Ayant vaincu la mort, glorieux de la gloire même de Dieu, Christ peut être proclamé premier-né d'une humanité nouvelle, justifiée et appelée à la gloire (v. 17b). Si le «un seul» dans l'ordre de la chute et de la mort n'est pas ce qui détermine l'œuvre divine de salut,

le «un seul» est par contre de la plus grande importance dans l'ordre de la grâce: en lui, Dieu a donné toute bénédiction, et sans retour. Voilà pourquoi il ne faut pas trop vite dire qu'en insistant sur l'unicité d'Adam, Rm 5 historicise le récit des origines<sup>(48)</sup>, car cette unicité est une simplification délibérée du récit biblique. Elle est d'ailleurs en tout semblable à celle des textes juifs, comme l'a montré le passage de *Sifra Leviticus*, et, nous l'avons vu, sa fonction est éminemment *rhétorique*<sup>(49)</sup>.

## V. Le statut rhétorique du passage

À vrai dire, en ce passage, tout est simplifié, afin de rendre les oppositions plus fortes. Paul procède par affirmations tranchées dont le statut rhétorique n'est pas immédiatement perceptible, puisque certains en font la conclusion de Rm 1-4, et d'autres la préparation de Rm 6-8. Car, en dépit des nombreuses conjonctions (γάρ, etc.) et de l'argument *a fortiori*, on est plus en présence d'affirmations apodictiques que d'une argumentation nourrie: Paul ne prouve pas à l'aide d'enthymèmes ou d'exemples, comme habituellement dans ses *probationes*, mais il présente des faits connus de ses lecteurs, aussi bien pour Adam que pour Jésus Christ<sup>(50)</sup>. Et la fonction du passage ne peut être déterminée que si l'on poursuit la lecture de Rm 6-8.

### 1. Les vv. 20-21: une propositio<sup>(51)</sup>

Le parallèle entre les vv. 12-14 et 15-21 a montré que l'affirmation sur la loi mosaïque du v. 20 n'est pas fortuite, mais que Paul

<sup>(48)</sup> Cf. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 408, selon qui insister sur le «un seul» «implies that Adam was a historical individual as much as was Jesus Christ. So Paul has historicized the symbolic Adam of Genesis». Il ne faut pas oublier que la teneur symbolique d'une figure ne s'oppose pas à son existence historique (et vice versa).

<sup>(49)</sup> La comparaison avec *Sifra Leviticus* et GenR a montré que la manière dont Rm 5 présente Adam est éminemment traditionnelle. Voilà pourquoi il n'est pas utile de reprendre ici la question de la «corporate personality» qui devrait prendre en considération l'ensemble des textes, et pas seulement Rm 5.

<sup>(50)</sup> Concernant Adam, Paul reprend en la simplifiant, les parallèles l'ont montré, la tradition biblique et juive.

<sup>(51)</sup> C'est-à-dire ce que Paul va chercher à préciser, expliquer et justifier par une série de preuves — la *probatio*.

voulait précisément arriver à cette déclaration: loin de changer le sort de l'humanité, la loi mosaïque n'a fait que l'aggraver, puisqu'elle a provoqué l'accroissement du péché. L'énoncé suivant (v. 21) est tout aussi provoquant, car il laisse entendre que la grâce surabonde indépendamment de la loi (mosaïque). Que Paul ait voulu provoquer l'étonnement, c'est le moins qu'on puisse dire. Mais il est aussi clair que ce sont ces versets qui déclenchent la *probatio* de Rm 6-8<sup>(52)</sup>. S'il est donc vrai que le passage, par ses multiples répétitions, met en relief l'opposition entre Adam et le Christ, on ne saurait simplement dire que les affirmations des vv. 20-21 concernant la loi mosaïque sont secondaires<sup>(53)</sup>: ce sont elles qui font difficulté et vont faire l'objet d'une argumentation qui va courir tout au long de Rm 6-8. Comme le dit B. Byrne,

The problem with which chap. 6 is concerned appears to be sparked off by Paul's statement in 5:20 [citation du verset]. This assertion gives rise to the standard objection that seems to have dogged Paul's justification of the 'unrighteous theory': if God's grace exercises itself by triumphing over sin, shall we not give it still greater scope by continuing in wrongdoing?<sup>(54)</sup>

De fait, la *synkrisis* finit avec les vv. 20-21, où sont énoncées les questions à approfondir et à préciser — entre grâce et péché, entre loi et grâce, entre loi et péché. Et elles vont l'être progressivement en Rm 6-8, si bien qu'à la fin de la section, en Rm 8,39 on peut réellement dire que les déclarations de 5,20-21 ont reçu leur explication.

## 2. En Rm 5-8, deux séries de synkriseis

Mais si, comme *propositio*, les vv. 20-21 ouvrent en quelque sorte la *probatio*, il n'en demeure pas moins vrai que la *synkrisis* des vv. 15-21 est elle aussi reprise et développée dans la *probatio*, dans la mesure où cette dernière revient, avec plus d'explications, sur les deux types d'humanité — dont ont parlé, en très bref, les vv. 15-21 —, celle en Christ (Rm 6 et 8) et celle sans Christ, encore sous l'oppression du péché et de la mort (Rm 7,7-25):

<sup>(52)</sup> Que Rm 6-8 soit une *probatio*, cela a déjà été maintes fois montré; il est donc inutile d'y revenir.

<sup>(53)</sup> Cf., par exemple, HOFIUS, «Die Adam-Christus-Antithese», 205.

<sup>(54)</sup> B. BYRNE, 'Sons of God' - 'Seed of Abraham' (Rome 1979) 86.



- A* (positif) les baptisés et leur vie en/avec Christ (6,1-7,6),  
*B* (négatif) le « Je » — sans Christ — sujet de la Loi; son impuissance face au péché due à celle de la Loi même (7,7-25)<sup>(55)</sup>,  
*A'* (positif) les baptisés animés par l'Esprit (8,1-30).

Rm 5,12-21 formule donc les situations opposées dont Rm 6-8 va expliciter les contenus. On peut ainsi dire que la *synkrisis* de Rm 5,12-21 a pour fonction de préparer celle de Rm 6-8:

<i>Rm 5,12-21:</i>	<i>Adam</i> — tous morts, pécheurs	<i>Christ</i> — tous vivront et régneront
<i>Rm 6-8:</i>	l'homme sous la loi et le péché, privé de la vie	ceux en Christ, délivrés du péché et ayant reçu la vie

Que le passage forme une unité rhétorique et thématique avec ce qui suit, le vocabulaire l'indique aussi. On peut aisément repérer en 5,12-21 quelques-uns des thèmes développés par la suite (loi et péché; mort et vie):

	<i>Rm 5,12-19</i>	<i>Rm 5,20-21</i>	<i>Rm 6-8</i>
νόμος	5,13	5,20	6,14.15; 7,1.2.3.4.5.6; 7,7.8.9.12.14.16; 7,21.22.23.25; 8,2.3.4.7
πλεονάζω - (ὕπερ)περισσεύω	5,15.17	5,20	6,1 (πλεονάζω)
ἁμαρτία	5,12.13	5,20.21	6,1.2.7.10.11.12.13.14.16.17.18. 20.22.23 7,5.7.8.9.11.13.14.17.20.23.25; 8,2.3.10
ἁμαρτάνω	5,12.14.16		6,15
βασιλεύω	5,14.17	5,21	6,12
θάνατος	5,12.14.17	5,21	6,3.4.5.9.16.21.23; 7,5.10.13.24; 8,2.6.38
χάρις - χάρισμα	5,15.16.17	5,20.21	6,1.14.15.17; 7,25
ζωή	5,17.18	5,21	6,4.22.23; 7,10; 8,2.6.10.38
αἰώνιος		5,21	6,22.23

<sup>(55)</sup> Il n'y a pas lieu de montrer ici que Rm 7,7-25 parle de l'humanité « sans Christ ». Pour un état de la question et une longue démonstration, voir J.-N. ALETTI, « Rm 7,7-25. Rhetorical Criticism and Its Usefulness », *SEA* 61 (1996) 77-95.

### 3. Rm 5,12-19: une narratio?

Que le passage ne puisse être rhétoriquement rattaché à Rm 1-4, mais doive être lié à la *probatio* de Rm 6-8, les différents indices jusqu'ici relevés le suggèrent, l'exigent même. Mais quel statut lui reconnaître? Celui d'une *narratio*, qui précède parfois la *probatio*, en fournissant des *semina probationum* ou même des preuves par les faits, comme, par exemple, en 1 Co 15,3-11; Ga 1-2 et Rm 1,19-32<sup>(56)</sup>? Mais il n'y a rien de narratif en ce passage: Paul a réduit l'information à son minimum, et la présence de l'argument *a fortiori* semble confirmer la nature discursive de ces versets. Nous avons néanmoins vu que, nonobstant ces traits, Paul ne prouve pas, mais se contente de rappeler brièvement des faits et des vérités admises par ses lecteurs chrétiens (aux vv. 15-19); à aucun moment il ne dit pourquoi tous les humains ont dû subir la mort à cause de la désobéissance du seul Adam, il ne dit pas davantage pourquoi tous seront sauvés en Christ, etc. Quant aux vv. 20-21, on l'a vu, comme *propositio*, ils constituent un tournant et préparent directement la *probatio*. Comment donc appeler les vv. 12-19? Les catégories des manuels sont inadéquates pour nous permettre d'étiqueter le passage; s'il n'a rien de narratif, il contient indiscutablement les *semina probationum* que les *narrationes* ont pour fonction de fournir. Ici encore Paul montre son originalité, sa manière bien à lui d'amener le lecteur aux questions qu'il veut débattre. Bref, a-t-on affaire à une *narratio* ou plutôt à quelque chose dont la fonction est analogue? Sans aucun doute<sup>(57)</sup>.

### Conclusion

L'exégèse de Rm 5,12-21 a longtemps été occupée par le fameux  $\epsilon\phi' \phi$  de 5,12d. Sans aucun doute, pareille constance s'explique par

<sup>(56)</sup> Sur ces différentes *narrationes*, voir H. D. BETZ, «The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians», *NTS* 21 (1975) 353-387; J.-N. ALETTI, «La dispositio rhétorique dans les épîtres pauliniennes: propositions de méthode», *NTS* 38 (1992) 385-401; D. F. WATSON, «Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15», *Rhetoric and the New Testament. Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (eds. S. E. PORTER - T. H. OLRICHT) (Sheffield 1993) 231-249.

<sup>(57)</sup> L'appellation *narratio* — et même *quasi-narratio* — pour Rm 5,12-19 n'est pas satisfaisante, mais les anciens eux-mêmes invitaient à la souplesse, lorsqu'ils rappelaient l'existence de plusieurs types de *narrationes*. Cf. QUINTILIEN, *Institutio oratoria* 4.2.

l'éventail des interprétations et leurs conséquences théologiques. Mais c'est lorsqu'on prend en considération toutes les composantes du passage — *l'expolitio* des vv. 13-14, la composition, la dynamique, la pointe, les racines bibliques et juives, etc. — que le vv. 12d prend tout son sens.

Il importait surtout de revenir sur les vv. 15-21, où la *synkrisis* a une fonction paradoxale, en un premier temps négative (vv. 15-17) — et nous avons vu l'importance de cette phase —, en un second temps positive, mais pour mettre en valeur des oppositions structurantes; car, par leur progression et leur logique, ces versets (pour le pôle adamique — première colonne du tableau 1), reprennent, en les élargissant, les vv. 12-14 et confirment l'interprétation fournie pour *l'expolitio* (vv. 13-14) et pour le v. 12d. Repérer enfin la dynamique de l'argumentation, qui tend vers l'opposition finale des vv. 20-21, a permis de déterminer la fonction entière du passage en Rm 5-8 et, par là, dans l'ensemble de la lettre.

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#### SUMMARY

Rom 5,12-21 — especially the  $\epsilon\phi' \phi$  clause of 5,12 — has been examined so many times that one might wonder whether there is anything new to say. But not all the components of the passage have been sufficiently taken into account by exegetes, especially its structure and dynamics, the *expolitio* of vv. 13-14 and, last but not least, the *synkrisis* of vv. 15-19. Besides, not enough attention has been paid to the Biblical and Jewish parallels. Only after the interrelationship of the rhetorical and semantic elements of the passage has been adequately considered, can one see its relevance and function in the Letter to the Romans.

## **Paul's Coherent Admonition in Galatians 6,1-6: Mutual Help and Individual Attentiveness**

A number of publications have explained the short passage Galatians 6,1-6 in quite different ways. What are the main difficulties in this text and how should one proceed to find a way out of the problems and come to a well-founded understanding of the passage? Let us first give a working translation of these six verses, as literally as possible.

- 1a Brothers, if a person is overtaken in some transgression,
- b you who are spiritual, you must restore such [a person] in a spirit of gentleness,
- c while looking to yourselves, so that you too may not be tempted.
- 2a Bear one another's burdens,
- b and so you will fulfil the law of Christ.
- 3a For if anyone thinks that he is something, when [in fact] he is nothing,
- b he deludes himself.
- 4a But let each put his own work to the test,
- b and then he will have a matter for boasting only regarding himself and not regarding the other.
- 5 For each must bear his own load.
- 6 However, let the one who is taught the Word share in all good things with the one who teaches.

The first part of this study will point out, with the aid of recent approaches, three serious problems. In the second part, an analysis of the text will be offered. The third part will try to indicate Paul's coherent reasoning in this passage.

### **I. Three Difficulties**

There is a double restriction in this study. First, only Gal 6,1-6 is dealt with and not, e.g., the whole of the pericope 5,25-6,10 (or the even larger unit 5,13-6,10)<sup>(1)</sup>. Second, within

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. e.g., the recently published study of W. SCHRAGE, "Probleme paulinischer Ethik anhand von Gal 5,25-6,10", A. VANHOYE (ed.), *La foi*

this subunit not all items will be treated<sup>(2)</sup>. We limit ourselves to three of them because they seem to be important and, moreover, they have quite lately been approached in a way which can hardly be agreed upon.

*No Coherent Argument in vv. 1-6?*

It is generally assumed that in many of his exhortations Paul is not pointing to particular situations existing in the churches addressed, but is rather using traditional, although not specifically Christian, material<sup>(3)</sup>. Because of the absence of actual concerns, little coherent reasoning or train of thought can be expected in such exhortative passages. It would seem, moreover, that in Gal 6,1-6 several aphorisms are present. In his commentary H. D. Betz gathered a wealth of *non verbatim* parallels from Greco-Roman literature<sup>(4)</sup>. How could one suppose a strictly logical connection or a sustained train of thought in such a combination of sayings? Betz finds in 5,25-6,10 a "collection of *sententiae*"<sup>(5)</sup>. He sees

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*qui par l'amour agit. Galates 4,1-6,16* (Benedictina 13; Rome 1996) 155-194 and "Diskussion" on 194-200. The author discusses on 166-169 "Gliederung und Abgrenzung".

<sup>(2)</sup> Our study is, therefore, very different from that of, e.g., R. B. HAYS, "Christology and Ethics in Galatians: The Law of Christ", *CBQ* 49 (1987) 268-290. For an even more general treatment, see J. G. BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh 1988); regarding 5,25-6,10, see esp. 146-177.

<sup>(3)</sup> For a good presentation of "usuelle und aktuelle Paränese" in Paul (beginning with M. Dibelius), see SCHRAGE, "Probleme", 160-166.

<sup>(4)</sup> H. D. BETZ, *Galatians. A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia 1979). For Gal 6,1-6, see 295-306. In each verse of this brief pericope Betz finds a maxim (or *sententia* or 'gnome'). Often this saying stands on its own and little of it is specifically Christian. Paul conforms his position to the ethical thought of his contemporaries (no exaggerated or extreme behavior), although, of course, all is taken up within the Christian context of Paul's letter (see 292-293).

<sup>(5)</sup> *Galatians*, 291. Betz constantly refers to contemporary Jewish and especially Hellenistic traditions and to the *topoi* of diatribe literature. Cf. BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, 147-148 and 170-172. In his book Barclay also discusses briefly the influence of Dibelius and his views on paraenesis (see 10-12).

some structure but no coherent, unitary argumentation<sup>(6)</sup>. Paul has assembled sayings which are but loosely related to one another<sup>(7)</sup>. As is well known, Betz's commentary has influenced a great number of exegetes.

In his 1995 study, "The Holy Spirit and the Human Spirit in Galatians (Gal 5,17)", J.C. O'Neill takes Betz's view to the extreme<sup>(8)</sup>. To be sure, the main point of O'Neill's article is the claim that in Gal 5,13–6,10 Paul refers to the Holy Spirit less often than is usually thought. He is convinced that "this section was originally a Jewish collection of moral aphorisms that was later incorporated into Paul's epistle"<sup>(9)</sup>. In the 24 verses he (now) detects no less than 25 "originally separate sayings"<sup>(10)</sup>. They are connected by catchwords, not by structured argument<sup>(11)</sup>. "The place where this can be seen most clearly is in Gal 6,2 and 6,5. Two true proverbs, each superficially contradicting the other, are simply

(<sup>6</sup>) *Galatians*, 292: "The sequence is neither uncoordinated nor overly systematized; some connection is provided by language and logic". Cf., e.g., F.J. MATERA, *Galatians* (Sacra Pagina 9; Collegeville 1992) 217: "The internal structure of this material [in 6,1-10] presents a problem. While it is apparent that this unit contains a number of maxims, it is not clear how or if these maxims are related to each other".

(<sup>7</sup>) Cf., e.g., F. MUSSNER, *Der Galaterbrief* (HTKNT 9; Freiburg 1974), 396: What life according to the Spirit means "wird ... an ... lose miteinander zusammenhängenden Paränesen und Beispielen gezeigt..." (but see the opposite conclusion on 402: "Es zeigt sich zurückschauend, dass 5,26-6,5 einen zusammengehörenden Komplex darstellt..."); T. SÖDING, *Das Liebegebot bei Paulus. Die Mahnung zur Agape im Rahmen der paulinischen Ethik* (NA 26; Münster 1995) 192: "die lockere Disposition" of 5,13–6,10. B. CORSANI, *Lettera ai Galati* (Genova 1990) 378, comes to the same opinion, be it in a somewhat different way. — For a thoroughly critical discussion of Betz, see BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, 170-177; cf. G.D. FEE, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody 1994) 459-460.

(<sup>8</sup>) J.C. O'NEILL, "The Holy Spirit and the Human Spirit in Galatians (Gal 5,17)", *ETL* 71 (1995) 107-120.

(<sup>9</sup>) O'NEILL, "The Holy Spirit", 117.

(<sup>10</sup>) O'NEILL, "The Holy Spirit", 112. See Table I on 119-120. In *The Recovery of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (London 1972), O'Neill found but 19 sayings! For a critique of this publication, see BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, 9-10 and 147. Cf. also A. VANHOYE, "Paracèse et doctrine pauliniennes: désaccord ou accord?", A. VANHOYE, (ed.), *La foi qui par l'amour agit*, 201-218, esp. 205.

(<sup>11</sup>) See the numbered catchwords in Tables I and II of O'NEILL, "The Holy Spirit", 119-121.

plonked down without any attempt at explanation: 'Bear one another's burdens' and 'Let each bear one's own burden'"<sup>(12)</sup>. O'Neill insists that we read such verses as though they stood isolated and alone; they are not related by logic. So, there is no connected, coherent argument in 5,13–6,10. The inavoidable consequence of this is that the context cannot help the exegete in trying to understand the particular verse, i.e., the aphorism. "Each saying must be taken by itself if it is to yield up its secret"<sup>(13)</sup>.

This is our first major question: Is it true that in 6,1-6 Paul is but a collector pasting together sentences — warnings, words of encouragement, counsels — and that Paul is not really an author who mounts an argument and writes connectedly?<sup>(14)</sup>

### *No Boasting in v. 4?*

The second major difficulty concerns v. 4 and, more in particular, the theme of boasting. Having read this verse, one immediately asks how Paul can write that, after putting to the test one's own work, a Christian will have a matter for boasting while in 6,14 the same Paul speaks of himself and declares: "far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ". Is all boasting, except for that in God and Christ and his cross, not to be rejected? We must, however, add at once that in v. 4 there is not only the mention of a previous condition, namely the testing of one's own work, but also the limitation εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον... καὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον, and admit that the meaning of these last phrases is not clear at all.

But does Paul consider the possibility of boasting of one's own work? In his 1986 contribution to the *Festschrift* for Heinrich Greeven, "Werkruhm und Christusruhm im Galaterbrief", G. Klein vehemently denies this possibility<sup>(15)</sup>. His admittedly complex

<sup>(12)</sup> O'NEILL, "The Holy Spirit", 112.

<sup>(13)</sup> O'NEILL, "The Holy Spirit", 112.

<sup>(14)</sup> O'NEILL, "The Holy Spirit", 116-117, is even of the opinion that it was not Paul himself but that it was "librarians of the communities" in the Jewish diaspora who added that kind of material to Paul's authentic letters. But here one must pause and ask: Is this still a sound exegetical approach or have we entered into speculations and pure fantasy?

<sup>(15)</sup> G. KLEIN, "Werkruhm und Christusruhm im Galaterbrief und die Frage nach einer Entwicklung des Paulus. Ein hermeneutischer und

opinion<sup>(16)</sup> is clear: "Dass Paulus... jedwedem Ruhm der Werke als dem Gipfel der Blasphemie widerstanden hat, wird durch Gal 6,4 nicht dementiert, sondern bestätigt" <sup>(17)</sup>.

Klein sees verses 1-5 as a text unit and thus disagrees here with Betz. Yet, what in v.1a appears to be an isolated case ("if anyone...") is broadened in vv.2-5 to the whole Christian community. Moreover, "lest you be tempted" in v.1c is only a secondary theme, while in vv.2-5 the human sinful condition becomes the main theme<sup>(18)</sup>. According to Klein, between v.1 and v.2 there is a qualitative change, "ein qualitativer Sprung" from sinful actions to radical sinfulness which, before possible deeds, already perverts the roots of human nature themselves<sup>(19)</sup>. In v.2 one must assume that for Paul all Christians have their "burdens". It would be wrong to refer to v.1 and, because of its *eventualis* form ("only in the case that"), speculate about the possibility that some Christians are without sin and do not need the help of their fellow Christians. If Paul in v.2 commits every Christian to mutual help, this means that every Christian has some "burden" (of sinfulness) and is, therefore, in need of the help of others<sup>(20)</sup>.

Hence, Klein strongly opposes a conditional interpretation of the participial clause *μηδὲν ὧν* in v.3a. There is no way of understanding this clause so as to permit exceptions ("in the case that one is

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exegetischer Zwischenruf", W. SCHRAGE (ed.), *Studien zum Text und zur Ethik des Neuen Testaments*. (FS. H. Greeven) (BZNT 47; Berlin 1986) 196-211.

<sup>(16)</sup> We cannot deal here with the position of H. Hübner which Klein wants to refute. Cf. H. HÜBNER, *Das Gesetz bei Paulus. Ein Beitrag zum Werden der paulinischen Theologie* (FRLANT 119; Göttingen <sup>3</sup>1982).

<sup>(17)</sup> KLEIN, "Werkruhm", 211; for the whole treatment of Gal 6,4, see esp. 202-209.

<sup>(18)</sup> Cf. KLEIN, "Werkruhm", 203: "Das, was v.1 einleitend am Einzelfall vor Augen rückt, erscheint in v.2ff. mit gewisser Akzentverlagerung ins Grundsätzliche erhoben".

<sup>(19)</sup> A more extended quotation may prove useful: "indem Paulus... ein zunächst moralisch geprägtes Sündenverständnis hinter sich lässt, steuert er die gerade für Christen stets aktuelle Einsicht an, dass Sünde sich nicht in der Untat... erschöpft, ja erst dort endgültig triumphiert, wo sie nicht bloss einzelne Taten, sondern das Sein des Menschen entstellt" (KLEIN, "Werkruhm", 205).

<sup>(20)</sup> Cf. KLEIN, "Werkruhm", 205: "der Terminus τὰ βάρη hat... als Oberbegriff zu gelten, der die unmoralische zusammen mit der moralischen Spielart der Sünde unter sich befasst".



nothing”), as if there could be some Christians (or, for that matter, some human beings) who before God “are something”. No, everyone, as soon as he thinks he is something, deceives himself, since in fact he is nothing. “To be nothing” points to “eine Grundbefindlichkeit..., die den Christen wie jeden Menschen prägt”<sup>(21)</sup>.

But how does Klein then understand the “work” of v.4a and “the (reason or ground or basis for) boasting” of v.4b? He maintains that the text of the first half of this verse does not allow one to supply the condition “and if the result of the testing is positive, then...”. According to Paul, each testing will, as it were, automatically lead to boasting<sup>(22)</sup>. Yet that boasting will take place “before, in front of” the boasting person alone (εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον), not before or in front of the other (οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον), i.e., not by comparison with the work of the other<sup>(23)</sup>. The double εἰς-construction does not point to the object of boasting, but to the “forum” for which the boasting occurs<sup>(24)</sup>. Now, in Klein’s opinion, since boasting in itself implies a public forum of others, the testing of one’s own work cannot provide a real ground for boasting. Thus, within this line of reasoning, even in v.4 boasting of one’s own work is radically excluded. Klein’s explanation of v.4 rejoins that of v.3: “ein frommes εἶναί τι bleibt allemal imaginär”<sup>(25)</sup>.

One should not wonder, therefore, that “kein ἔργον je ein wirkliches καύχημα verschafft” to the individual Christian<sup>(26)</sup>. Through self testing each Christian reaches a consciousness of nothingness; each also realizes that everyone has to carry his or her own load

(21) KLEIN, “Werkruhm”, 206. Cf. SCHRAGE, “Probleme”, 190: “Paulus sagt..., dass überhaupt kein Mensch von sich aus etwas ist. Das konzessive μηδὲν ὄν gilt also grundsätzlich”.

(22) Cf. KLEIN, “Werkruhm”, 208.

(23) Cf. KLEIN, “Werkruhm”, 205: not “durch einen der eigenen Korrektheit gewissen Vergleich mit den anderen”.

(24) Cf. KLEIN, “Werkruhm”, 209: “das καύχημα gilt vor dem Forum des Gerichtstages”. See Phil 2,16.

(25) KLEIN, “Werkruhm”, 209. Cf. W. HARNISCH, “Einübung des neuen Seins. Paulinische Paränese am Beispiel des Galaterbriefes”, ZTK 84 (1987) 279-296, esp. 295 (independently from Klein, see n.45). According to Harnisch, v.4 has “einen unverkennbaren *ironischen Klang*”. Boasting without a forum is impossible. V.4 is a “*contradictio in adiecto*” (n.45).

(26) KLEIN, “Werkruhm”, 209.

(v.5). So it becomes equally evident how in their sinfulness all Christians need the help of their fellow Christians (cf. v. 2).

After listening critically to this subtle and specious explanation one cannot but ask whether an interpretation which declares that in v. 4 — against the obvious meaning — all boasting is excluded still respects the text, and what Paul means by it. Yet the difficulty of how to understand Paul's words in this verse remains, especially in view of the clearly opposite statement in v. 14.

### *Not Everyday Worries in v. 5?*

The third difficulty is called by D.W. Kuck in his recently study a "relatively modest *crux*" which is, however, "bound up closely with one's understanding of all of Gal 6.1-5, the rhetorical logic of which has been far from clear to interpreters"<sup>(27)</sup>. Kuck vigorously defends the eschatological interpretation of v. 5. Each person will bring his or her own work to God and God will judge it on the last day. He defends this position with the following five points.

1. This understanding is not new. Other exegetes, probably a slight majority, have chosen this interpretation<sup>(28)</sup>. Augustine, too, read the verse in this way. 2. With its mention of the presentation of one's own work (= burden) to God, v. 5 provides a climactic motivation against boasting in the community<sup>(29)</sup>. 3. There are a number of Jewish and Christian texts which stress final individual judgment (over against a mistaken confidence in belonging to the community). 4 Ezra 7.104-5 is a striking passage, indeed, since it has "both a parallel to the 'burden-bearing' language referring to God's judgment and an example of a tendency to see final judgment in individual rather than corporate terms"<sup>(30)</sup>.

<sup>(27)</sup> D.W. KUCK, "'Each will bear his own burden': Paul's Creative Use of an Apocalyptic Motif", *NTS* 40 (1994) 289-298, quotation on p. 289.

<sup>(28)</sup> KUCK, "Own burden", 289, n.2 (the defenders of the non-eschatological meaning are also mentioned in this note).

<sup>(29)</sup> Cf. KUCK, "Own burden", 294: "The principal argument in favour of taking Gal 6.5 as a reference to the eschatological judgment of God is that the flow of thought leads to this climax".

<sup>(30)</sup> KUCK, "Own burden", 295.

4. Within the immediate context of Gal 6,5, Paul speaks of the final individual judgment (see 5,21 and 6,7-9). Even more telling is that in 5,10 he announces the future judgment of troublemakers and employs the same verb βασιτάζω, also in the future tense<sup>(31)</sup>. 5. Finally, the “emphasis on the judgment of individual Christians on the basis of their work in the Lord’s church comes up frequently in Paul”<sup>(32)</sup>. In particular, Kuck draws attention to two longer passages, Rom 14,1-12 and 1 Cor 3,5-4,5, and briefly analyzes them<sup>(33)</sup>.

According to Kuck, in vv.4-5 Paul refers to an individual’s work, which involves personal pride but cannot be used for boasting by a comparison with the work of others; it is at the same time a “load” or “burden” to be presented to God for evaluation and judgment. — Yet, is v.5 strictly eschatological, and are “work” (v.4) and “load” (v.5) identical?

## II. Analysis of the Text

A twofold analysis is to be done. Can a first general consideration of the text and the context already point to a certain coherence of 6,1-6? In view of the difficulties mentioned in the first part, what are the exegetical data of the individual verses?

### *The Passage 6,1-6*

The exhortation in 5,16, “walk by the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh”, is followed in vv.17-23 by an exposition which depicts two opposite ways of life. V.24 concludes this passage: “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”.

The admonition starts again in v.25: “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit”. This is a quite general injunction. V.26, however, provides a first (negative) application: “Let us have

<sup>(31)</sup> Cf. KUCK, “Own burden”, 295-296.

<sup>(32)</sup> KUCK, “Own burden”, 296.

<sup>(33)</sup> KUCK, “Own burden”, 297, concludes as follows: “Each is a reflection by Paul on the theme of the dynamics between the self-regard of the individual Christian and the harmony of the community. In each case, Paul grounds the individual attitude in the promise and threat of a particular judgment of one’s Christian work, with appropriate rewards or loss of rewards”.

no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another". In 6,1, it would seem that Paul presents the positive alternative: "(But,) brothers, let us, in a spirit of gentleness, (rather) restore a fellow Christian who is overtaken by some transgression". One could call this verse a second application or concretisation of 5,25<sup>(34)</sup>. It is introduced, not without emphasis, by the vocative "brothers"<sup>(35)</sup>. 6,6 constitutes then a third command: "Let him who is taught the Word share all good things with him who teaches". The fourth exhortation, "be not deceived", in v.7 is general and so is the fifth one in 6,9-10, which is, as it were, all-encompassing: "Let us not grow weary in well-doing... let us do good to all...". But is this enumeration the appropriate method for reaching a global view of the pericope?

Not everything in 5,25-6,10 is an exhortation. Some verses contain a clarification and then a reflection or motivation<sup>(36)</sup>. One can refer to the eschatologically oriented considerations in 6,7b-8. But it would seem that also within 6,2-6 a clarifying development of the injunction of mutual assistance is presented. V. 2a takes up and generalizes the order of v. 1b. V. 3, introduced by "for", appears to resume and reflect upon the warning of v. 1c. In its own way, v. 4a offers by means of a specific precept an alternative behavior, opposite to that of v. 3a; it is introduced by "but". Although we do not see immediately how v. 5 is logically

<sup>(34)</sup> According to E. DE WITT BURTON, *The epistle to the Galatians* (ICC; Edinburgh 1921) 326, the (ἐὰν) καί ("nevertheless") of v. 1a also connects with what precedes: "the case of one who should nevertheless fail to obey this injunction" (= v. 26).

<sup>(35)</sup> Cf. BETZ, *Galatians*, 295.

<sup>(36)</sup> It may be interesting to have a look at the persons and their arrangement:

6,25-26	first plural
5, 1-2	second plural (third sing. in 1a; sec. sing. in 1c)
5, 3-6	third singular
5, 7a	second plural
5,7b-8	third singular
5,9 -10	first plural

'Plural' points to "corporate responsibility", 'singular' to "individual accountability". Cf. a similar presentation by BARCLAY, *Obeying the Truth*, 149-150; taken over by MATERA, *Galatians*, 217-218, and G.F. WESSELS, "The Call to Responsible Freedom in Paul's Persuasive Strategy. Galatians 5:13-6:10", *Neot* 26 (1992) 461-474, esp. 470-471.

connected with what precedes it<sup>(37)</sup>, the verb “to bear” is the same as in v.2 and “load” indicates the generic category of which “burdens” (= heavy loads, weights) in v.2 are but a specification. There seems to be a contradiction between these two verses as far as content is concerned, but the data just mentioned, together with the motivating γάρ in v.5, strongly suggest that this last verse belongs to the text unit which begins at 6,1. Although v. 6, with its expression “to teach the Word” and its double use of κατηχέω, sounds more specifically Christian, it is connected to v.5 by δέ and presents itself as a further qualification.

The presence of at least some logical coherence within 6,1-6 is thus intimated by this first analysis of the argument<sup>(38)</sup>. The coherence is confirmed by several factors: the vocative “brothers” at the beginning of v. 1; the causal particle γάρ in both v. 3 and v. 5; the possible oppositional particle δέ in v.4 as well as in v.6. Furthermore there is what seems to be an *inclusio* by means of the verb βαστάζω, as well as “burdens” and “load”, in v. 2 and v. 5 respectively. And we have, moreover, a new beginning in v.7, a quite general and negative injunction. Yet a more detailed exegesis of the individual verses is needed.

### *Exegesis of the Individual Verses*

The following explanation of Gal 6,1-6 will not be exhaustive. A more detailed comment should be given only in so far as it is helpful for the solution of the three problems indicated in the first part of this study, i.e., the line of thought in this pericope, Paul’s boasting, and the so-called eschatological reference in v. 5.

*Verse 1.* In Paul, the vocative “brothers” does not always stand at the beginning of a passage, but it certainly manifests here an insistence on the injunction which follows. The new start of 6,1 is but a relative or a minor one<sup>(39)</sup>. For Paul’s use of

<sup>(37)</sup> Cf. BETZ, *Galatians*, 303. But see FEE, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 461-462 and his defence of the meaning of “Spirit people”, addressed to the whole community: “Spirit led Galatians” (cf. 5,18).

<sup>(38)</sup> Even Betz writes about 5,25-6,10: “At first sight the collection appears confused, but it is not without organization and structure. Most likely Paul himself is the composer of the individual *sententiae*, a fact which demonstrates his abilities as a gnomic poet” (*Galatians*, 291).

<sup>(39)</sup> Cf., e.g., BETZ, *Galatians*, 295; SCHRAGE, “Probleme”, 168-169.

πνευματικοί<sup>(40)</sup> and ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος connects this verse with 5,25 where the "Spirit" is mentioned twice. Moreover, as already stated, there may be a conscious link which, in a slight paraphrase of 5,26–6,1, runs as follows: "You, Spirit-filled people, must not be vainglorious, not provoke nor envy one another; you should rather restore the brother who is overtaken by a transgression"<sup>(41)</sup>. Of course, the word "rather" is not expressed. Yet, the injunction of mutual help as an alternative to provocation and envy does make sense; it was probably present in Paul's mind. This would confirm the view that "brothers" does not function as a completely new beginning.

In v. 1a the protasis (ἐάν plus the subjunctive) is an *eventualis* form: "in the case that". By means of it Paul points to the possibility — if not to the probability — of transgressions in the Galatian churches. The verb of v. 1b, "restore", is an imperative present and reflects a rule that is to be observed always. "Surprisingly, Paul does not seem overly concerned with the offense itself, but his concern is more with the possibility that the handling of such a case might become a source of evil for those who administer it" (see v. 1c)<sup>(42)</sup>. It is worth noting that, formally speaking, the participle of v. 1c should have been in the plural. Paul suddenly changes to the second person singular: σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῇς. That second person singular is emphatic and every Christian in Galatia is being addressed<sup>(43)</sup>. The third person singular will predominate in vv. 3-6: anyone, each one, his own work. One rightly tends to think that the temptation of which v. 1c speaks refers to the same fault as that which is supposed in v. 1a<sup>(44)</sup>.

<sup>(40)</sup> Cf. the overview of possible meanings of πνευματικοί in J. D. G. DUNN, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Black's CNT; London 1993) 319-320.

<sup>(41)</sup> Cf. FEE, *God's Empowering Presence*, 460, n. 321. The verb προλαμβάνομαι here presumably means "to be taken by surprise" by the fault (BURTON, *Galatians*, 326-327) or "entrapped by sin". Dunn, and others, prefer "to be detected": "has been discovered (unexpectedly) in the act of some 'transgression'" by fellow Christians (DUNN, *Galatians*, 319).

<sup>(42)</sup> BETZ, *Galatians*, 291; cf. DUNN, *Galatians*, 321; HARNISCH, "Einübung", 293.

<sup>(43)</sup> See SCHRAGE, "Probleme", 165, n. 19 (cf. Calvin and Erasmus).

<sup>(44)</sup> Otherwise, e.g., BETZ, *Galatians*, 298, who thinks of self-righteousness; this is also the preference of MATERA, *Galatians*, 241. But see, e.g., R. N. LONGENECKER, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas 1990) 274; BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, 158-159; CORSANI, *Galati*, 382-383; DUNN, *Galatians*, 321.

*Verse 2.* There is no connecting particle between v. 1 and v. 2. This asyndetic construction is not a real break but supposes a logical link with what precedes<sup>(45)</sup>; it is all the more understandable when one takes into account the added warning in v. 1c which constitutes an interruption in the argument. Strictly speaking, v. 2 resumes v. 1b; it should not be connected with v. 1c. Most commentators agree that the “bearing of burdens (τὰ βάρη)” of v. 2 concretizes the mutual help to be given (cf. v. 1b). The (heavy) burdens are to be seen as related in some way or another to that eventual transgression. They are, it is often said, the consequences of sin: the contrition, the depression, the culpability on the side of the sinner, the compassionate yet difficult taking care of others. However, one may ask whether “bearing one another’s burdens” is not a generalization *vis-à-vis* the “restoring” of v. 1b. True, the burdensome amendment commanded in v. 1b remains in the forefront, but “burdens” sounds somewhat broader than what is suggested there. The term seems to refer to all kinds of “heavy weights”, of difficulties<sup>(46)</sup>. Another shift should not be overlooked: in v. 1 the “sinner” is placed over against the “Spirit people”; in v. 2 there is a complete reciprocity, since the bearing of burdens is mutual<sup>(47)</sup>.

It must be stated against Klein that between v. 1 and v. 2 there is no qualitative shift from actual sin to a most profound sinful condition (*Grundbefindlichkeit*). That action of bearing manifests the “spirit of gentleness” of which v. 1b speaks. As far as the

(45) Cf. MUSSNER, *Galater*, 398: “Der Vers ist asyndetisch angeschlossen, was, wie wiederholt in Gal, ein Zeichen für einen gedanklichen Zusammenhang mit dem Vorausgehenden ist”.

(46) Cf. BURTON, *Galatians*, 329; H. SCHLIER, *Der Brief an die Galater* (KEKNT; Göttingen 1971) 371; BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, 132; SCHRAGE, “Probleme”, 188-189; SÖDING, *Liebesgebot*, 193-194; BETZ, *Galatians*, 299. Cf. Rom 15,1 and 1 Cor 12,36. The verb and the noun are present in the parable of the workers in the vineyard, see Matt 20,12; cf. also Luke 14,27: “to ‘bear’ the cross”. A specific reference to financial support for Jerusalem, as defended by J. G. STRELAN, “Burden-Bearing and the Law of Christ: A Re-Examination of Galatians 6:2”, *JBL* 94 (1975) 266-276, is not evident. See the critique by, e.g., E. M. YOUNG, “‘Fulfill the Law of Christ’: An Examination of Galatians 6:2”, *StudiaBT* 7 (1977) no. 2, 31-42.

(47) HAYS, “Christology and Ethics”, 286-288, appropriately criticizes Betz for his explanation of v. 2a by means of the friendship *topos* in the Socratic tradition and parallel texts.

content of v.2b is concerned<sup>(48)</sup>, it remains somewhat strange for the reader that the fulfilment of the law of Christ ("and 'so' you will fulfil...") consists in this one line of action<sup>(49)</sup>, even if the mutual bearing of burdens is a very comprehensive rule and even if it may be granted that its primary relation to sin is to a certain degree overcome.

By using in Gal 6,2b the paradoxical phrase "the law of Christ", Paul undoubtedly refers to 5,14 (in both verses: law, (ἀνα)πληρόω, and the concept "love of neighbor")<sup>(50)</sup>. The phrase was most probably not a slogan of the opponents nor is it referring to a new "messianic torah". By "the law of Christ" Paul means both the replacement and reinterpretation of the torah<sup>(51)</sup>. He refers to "the pattern of action (or 'structure of existence') exemplified by the Christ who bore the burdens of others in becoming a curse 'for us'. Therein lies the fundamental paradigm for Christian ethics"<sup>(52)</sup>.

*Verse 3.* For J.M.G. Barclay vv.3-5 form a cluster: "thematically they belong closely together"<sup>(53)</sup>. The short conditional period in this verse is a "realis" construction, a condition of fact or, better, a simple condition. By this construction itself nothing is said about the reality of the protasis; only the logical connection between protasis and apodosis is expressed: "if this, then that" (compare with the "eventualis" construction in v.1a).

<sup>(48)</sup> Regarding the variant reading in v.2b (aorist imperative instead of the future tense) it may suffice to refer to B.M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart 21994) 530.

<sup>(49)</sup> Cf. CORSANI, *Galati*, 384.

<sup>(50)</sup> Gal 6,2a recalls 5,13c: "through love be servants/slaves of one another". Burden-bearing is the work of a slave; the two clauses underline the reciprocity; and, in both, concrete mutual love is their command.

<sup>(51)</sup> Cf. BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, 143-145. See also 138-142 where Barclay contends that Paul avoids the terms for observance of the law and uses instead the "ambiguous" fulfilment terminology (Rom 8,4; 13,8.10; Gal 5,14; 6,2): "Christians do not 'observe' the law, they 'fulfil' it, and they fulfil it through the one love-command and as it is redefined as 'the law of Christ'" (142).

<sup>(52)</sup> HAYS, "Christology and Ethics", 286-287. For the different possible meanings of "the law of Christ", cf., e.g., DUNN, *Galatians*, 322-324; MATERA, *Galatians*, 219-221; LONGENECKER, *Galatians*, 275-276; SCHRAGE, "Probleme", 164-165 and 183-188.

<sup>(53)</sup> *Obedying the Truth*, 159.



V. 3 provides a sort of further reflection, a comment on the warning of v. 1c; it may even constitute the grounding of that clause. The γάρ of v. 3 is most likely to be linked not with v. 2 but with v. 1c<sup>(54)</sup>. Yet the connection is not explicitly expressed. A Christian must take care of himself, so that he, too, may not be tempted (v. 1c). Why? Because he, too, is but a fragile and weak human creature. That weakness, however, is not the main point in v. 3, although it is present in the phrase “whereas [in fact] he is nothing”.

The participial clause μηδὲν ὄν is best taken concessively: “although as a matter of fact he is nothing”. This is, of course, exaggerated language which should not be explained literally as is done, e.g., by G. Klein. Christians are something; they are God’s creation, they are forgiven and justified persons. To be sure, when a comparison is made between the Creator and a creature, or the Redeemer and a sinner, the distance between them is immense. Yet, Christians are more than “nothing”.

V. 3, however, in no way describes all Christians (nor, for that matter, all human beings). What Paul intends to say is somewhat hidden behind his radicalized expressions and the brevity of his style. We may paraphrase the verse as follows: “If one thinks himself somebody without recognizing that all he is and possesses comes from God, i.e., if one thinks of himself as if he were not created and not a forgiven sinner, if one considers something as if it were not a gift (cf. 1 Cor 3,18-21 and 4,7), then he really deceives himself”. Thus the participial phrase μηδὲν ὄν, with its concessive nuance, applies to the Christian who mistakenly and wrongly thinks that he is something. One final remark: in v. 1c a temptation to sin is meant while in v. 3b Paul only speaks of self-deception, although in v. 3a the boasting is wrong and sinful.

By means of a paraphrase such as the one given above, we suddenly see more clearly how v. 3 prepares v. 4, not only by its vocabulary, namely the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτόν, but also and even more so by the presence of the idea of “thinking to be something” (in the wrong way). The idea of boasting appears explicitly in v. 4.

<sup>(54)</sup> Otherwise BURTON, *Galatians*, 330 (with v. 2b). LONGENECKER, *Galatians*, who puts vv. 3 and 5 between quotation marks, is of the opinion that the postpositive particle γάρ, here and in v. 5, signals a traditional maxim of the Greco-Roman world (see 268, 271, 276-277).

*Verse 4.* The adversative particle *δέ* marks an antithesis to what precedes<sup>(55)</sup>. V.4 is the opposite parallel of v.3, even more so than is usually assumed. Of course, a forceful imperative is not an if-clause. Yet, together with the second clause of v.4b, which explains what will happen once the instruction is obeyed, the imperative *δοκιμαζέτω* in v.4a can be regarded as almost the equivalent of a conditional protasis: “If one puts his own work to the test, then...”<sup>(56)</sup>. By this conversion into an if-clause, the second clause becomes the apodosis and stresses the legitimacy of boasting. In v.3a the protasis indicates a wrong action: if anyone thinks that he is something, being nothing (almost = if he boasts in the wrong way); the protasis of v.4a proposes and demands the right behavior by requiring a prior examination of one's own work<sup>(57)</sup>. In v.3b the self-deception is put forward because there is really nothing to be proud of; in v.4b an evidently correct and legitimate boasting is conceded: “that person will have a ground for boasting”<sup>(58)</sup>.

In view of this parallelism with v.3, one cannot but suppose that the outcome of the testing in v.4a must be positive; this is implied by the line of reasoning<sup>(59)</sup>. Only with a “good” work will there be a ground for boasting. By means of the temporal adverb *τότε*, Paul also emphasizes that the exercise of self-examination has to be done first: after that exercise (and its positive outcome), “then” that person will have a real ground for boasting. It could be that, in Paul's mind, *τὸ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ* is still in some way related to the “burdens” of v.2a and, through them, to the restoration work of v.1b. Yet, since the distance between v.2 and v.4 is considerable and Paul's thought has been progressing, a wider interpretation of “his own work” is probable. “Work” is, then, a term which points

<sup>(55)</sup> Cf. BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, 160; CORSANI, *Galati*, 387; LONGENECKER, *Galatians*, 276-277. Compare, however, the opinion of BETZ, *Galatians*, 303: “Another maxim follows, perhaps connected with v3 by the catchword (*δοκ-*). The saying, however, is independent”.

<sup>(56)</sup> The same operation could be applied to 6,2: “If you bear one another's burdens, (then) you will fulfil the law of Christ”, and 5,13: “If you walk by the Spirit, (then) you will not gratify the desires of the flesh”.

<sup>(57)</sup> Cf. MATERA, *Galatians*, 221: “The antidote to self-deception is to test oneself”.

<sup>(58)</sup> Neither in v.4 nor in v.3 does Paul speak of actual boasting.

<sup>(59)</sup> Cf. BURTON, *Galatians*, 332: “A protasis may be mentally supplied, ‘if his work shall be proved good’”.

to all that which is done during the life of a Christian<sup>(60)</sup>. If the result of that self-examination is positive, we are brought to assume — against G. Klein — that such a Christian is allowed to think that he “is something” (cf. v. 3); moreover, Paul explicitly states in v. 4b that this Christian has a ground for boasting<sup>(61)</sup>. The word καύχημα in v. 4b indicates not the act itself of boasting, but the ground for boasting; in this context, it is identical with the “work” (v. 4a).

However, by the phrase “with reference to himself, in respect to himself”, there is a limit to that legitimate boasting. One should notice at once that the restriction is not given afterwards, as if first the boasting is conceded and only then the limitation added. No, the Greek text, almost simultaneously, says that such a person “then, regarding himself only (τότε εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον), will have<sup>(62)</sup> a ground for boasting”. The phrases “regarding *himself*” and “*his own work*” clearly correspond to one another.

The opposition follows: “and not regarding the other (καὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον)”. What does this last expression mean? The most probable solution to this problem must come from the fact that Paul is thinking here of a comparison. One must, therefore, mentally supply the following: “and not through comparison with the work of another Christian”<sup>(63)</sup>. This further implies, it would seem: “not through despising the other or holding the other in contempt”. If

<sup>(60)</sup> “Work” means more than “conduct or actions” (so DUNN, *Galatians*, 325); it is the work done, the achievements. BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, 161, too, comments less correctly, I think: “the basic character of a person’s existence”. — As is well known, a number of exegetes claim that there is a Pauline distinction between the negative plural (“works of the law”) and the positive singular (“work”).

<sup>(61)</sup> MUSSNER, *Galater*, 401, strangely writes: “Leider zeigt eine ehrliche Selbstprüfung, dass ‘das eigene Werk’ meist mit Sünde behaftet ist, so dass jegliches Sich-rühmen nur κενοδοξία ist”. But this is not the point in v. 4. For “boasting” in Paul, see J. LAMBRECHT, “Dangerous Boasting. Paul’s Self-Commendation in 2 Cor 10-13”, R. BIERINGER (ed.), *The Corinthian Correspondence* (BETL 125; Leuven 1996) 325-346.

<sup>(62)</sup> Cf. BURTON, *Galatians*, 332. The future “will have” is not eschatological; otherwise CORSANI, *Galati*, 381 (“probabilmente escatologica”); and MUSSNER, *Galater*, 401.

<sup>(63)</sup> Cf., e.g., SCHLIER, *Galater*, 274; J.-M., LAGRANGE, *Saint Paul Épître aux Galates* (EB; Paris 1926), 157; DUNN, *Galatians*, 325; SCHRAGE, “Probleme”, 191. For “boasting in front of, before”, see Rom 4,2 and 15,7 (πρὸς θεόν twice); 1 Cor 1,29 (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ); 2 Cor 7,14 (ἐπὶ Τίτου).

this interpretation is correct, Paul almost imperceptibly reverts to an earlier injunction: a virtuous Christian must avoid vainglory as well as provocation (cf. 5,26).

There is still another point. Our understanding of v.4 assumes that the position of Klein (see pp. 36-39) can hardly be accepted. He rightly stresses that the εἰς + the accusative construction does not indicate the object of boasting. Yet his interpretation "before, in front of" is most likely incorrect here<sup>(64)</sup>. Moreover, the question could indeed be asked what boasting "before, in front of oneself" means. However, boasting in respect to oneself, not by comparison with others — their presence is not excluded by v.4 — is perfectly possible.

*Verse 5.* Paul continues to speak in v.5 with more or less the same vocabulary or with analogous concepts<sup>(65)</sup>. There can be no doubt that the verse is integrated in the passage. V.5, introduced by γάρ, gives the motivation. But what precisely is "grounded" by this clause<sup>(66)</sup>? Again one must try to render explicit what is implied. In v.5 Paul presumably gives a reason why one should not compare oneself with another. That reason is contained in the saying, "each one will bear his own load"<sup>(67)</sup>. The somewhat hidden meaning is

<sup>(64)</sup> "Before" is present in 2Cor8,24: ἡμῶν καυχήσεως ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν εἰς αὐτοὺς ("of our boasting about you 'to', i.e., before, in front of them"). The most interesting parallel to Gal6,4 is no doubt Rom4,2, where the noun "ground for boasting" and the verb "have" are present: εἰ γὰρ Ἀβραάμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη, ἔχει καύχημα, ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς θεόν: Abraham has a ground for boasting (namely if he were justified by works), but not before God. Yet πρὸς ("before") in Rom4,2 and εἰς ("regarding") in Gal6,4 are different. For a study of Rom4,2, see J. LAMBRECHT, "Why is Boasting Excluded? A Note on Romans 3,27 and 4,2", id., *Pauline Studies* (BETL 115; Leuven 1994) 27-31.

BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, translates v.4b: "and then he will direct his boast to himself alone and not to his neighbour" (160) and comments: "after testing one's own work one must not flaunt it before others but keep one's boast to oneself" (161). But does the Greek allow such an interpretation?

<sup>(65)</sup> For ἕκαστος, see v.4; for βασιτάζω, see v.2a; for τὸ ἴδιον, cf. ἑαυτοῦ in v.4a; and for the generic term φορτίον, cf. the specific term βάρη in v.2a.

<sup>(66)</sup> Cf. BETZ, *Galatians*, 303-304; yet Betz takes the particle as having no motivating force (just indicating continuation!) and thinks that the implicit idea is that "one should avoid taking on more than one can handle" (304). But within the context of Gal6,1-6 this is hardly the point.

<sup>(67)</sup> LAGRANGE, *Galates*, 157, says that Paul "laisse entrevoir ici qu'il y

that each Christian is “loaded” by his own difficulties. In v. 4b the future tense is employed indicatively (that person “will have”); in v. 5, however, the future is most likely imperatival: “each one will have to bear, each one must bear his own load”. This may be preferable to seeing it as a gnomic future, i.e., a future often found in aphorisms<sup>(68)</sup>.

If the reconstructed line of thought is still correct, Paul is referring to the very life of all Christians (“each one”), not to the day of final judgment. Like “burdens” in v. 2a, “load” in v. 5 points to the negative aspects of everyday life. In v. 2a the connection of “burdens” with sin still had to be accepted. Here, in v. 5, the meaning of the generic term “load” is almost certainly much wider; it may point to any adverse circumstance and tribulation, but also to personal shortcomings, sin and shame<sup>(69)</sup>. However, the command to mutual help in 6,2 forbids us to add to “will bear his own load” in v. 5 the nuance “completely alone”. This negative load that must be carried (v. 5) is opposed to the positive work of v. 4a which constitutes a ground for boasting. Even the Christian with plenty of good “work” will have to bear “his own load”! There can be no doubt that the bearing as well as the boasting occur in daily life before the final judgment<sup>(70)</sup>.

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a un revers à la medaille”. Regarding v. 2 and v. 5, he notes: “... la prétendue contradiction n’est qu’un aspect piquant et paradoxal sous lequel sont présentées les choses. Car c’est précisément parce que chacun a quelque chose à porter qu’on doit s’aider les uns les autres” (158). Cf. BURTON, *Galatians*, 334: “The paradoxical antithesis to v. 2a is doubtless conscious and intentional”.

<sup>(68)</sup> SCHRAGE, “Probleme”, 192, considers the possibility of an eschatological future, but adds: “das Futur kann gnomisch sein”.

<sup>(69)</sup> Otherwise but less correct, I think, BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, 161-162: load “seems to represent the weight not of suffering or sin but of responsibility before God” (162). The opinion of SCHLIER, *Galater*, 274, is to be rejected: “Φορτίον ist kaum von ἔργον unterschieden”. The same applies to HARNISCH, “Einübung”, 295 (one’s own load = “das ruhmreiche Werk”).

<sup>(70)</sup> Is there a reference to 5,10, where the same verb in the same future tense is found and the meaning is clearly eschatological? If so, then 6,5 must also be eschatological. But this deduction is unlikely since the verb in 5,10 is followed by τὸ κρίμα which indicates that the expression by itself connotes the final judgment. The other “data” put forward by Kuck with regard to the climatic position of the verse and the parallel texts (see text on 39-40) are equally insufficient to confer an eschatological meaning to 6,5.

*Verse 6.* Even this verse is called a "maxim" by Betz<sup>(71)</sup>. The third person singular continues, but now Paul addresses "the one who is taught the Word". That person must share (perhaps: "must continue to share") in all good things with "the one who teaches". The vocabulary in this sentence points explicitly to a specifically Christian context<sup>(72)</sup>. By the particle *δέ* (again adversative, cf. v. 4) this appeal is added, one is tempted to say, as an afterthought, a correction of v.5. Paul "hastens to qualify his last exhortation"<sup>(73)</sup>. For a Christian could go too far in taking care only of his own worries. There is the community as well and, more in particular, those who are so involved in teaching the Gospel that they do not have enough to live. They must be helped. A Christian must share with them "in all good things". It would seem that Paul, in the first place (but not exclusively), points to material, financial support<sup>(74)</sup>.

### III. The Coherence of 6,1-6

The results of this long analysis have to be brought together. However, before we attempt to reconstruct the line of thought within 6,1-6, it can already be stated that in Paul's reasoning there are shifts (see, e.g., v. 1c). More than once, the elements of the argument remain hidden or must be supplied (see, e.g., at the end of v. 4 and in v. 5). It happens that Paul returns to an idea which was no longer focused upon in the immediately preceding context (see, e.g., v. 2 and v. 3). Some concepts are taken up by different terms, but a broadening of their meaning may be assumed (see, e.g.,

<sup>(71)</sup> BETZ, *Galatians*, 304, emphasizes its independence: "The *δέ* ("but") provides a loose connection with the preceding, simply indicating that this saying follows v. 5. The meaning of the saying must, therefore, be established first on its own terms".

<sup>(72)</sup> Otherwise BETZ, *Galatians*, 305: "Again, the content is not specifically Christian". Yet "Word" refers to the gospel message. For Paul's use of this type of *κοινων*-terminology, cf. esp. Rom 12,13; 15,27 and Phil 4,15.

<sup>(73)</sup> DUNN, *Galatians*, 326.

<sup>(74)</sup> Cf. BURTON, *Galatians*, 338-339; SCHRAGE, "Probleme", 192-193; LONGENECKER, *Galatians*, 279. See also the long discussion of this verse in J. HAINZ, *Koinonia. "Kirche" als Gemeinschaft bei Paulus* (BU 16; Regensburg 1982) 62-89.

“burdens” in v.2a over against “transgression” in v.1a, and “load” in v.5 over against “burdens” in v.2a). To claim that all this occurs because Paul is stringing together well-known maxims or aphorisms is at best only a part of the explanation. These data are certainly also due to the spontaneous or emotional, yet logically not “unconnected”, manner in which many people often speak, and write. Paul was no exception.

Before a final survey of the themes, we will try to indicate the flow of thought in Paul’s argument within 6,1-6<sup>(75)</sup>. That such a reconstruction is to a certain degree hypothetical will easily be conceded.

### *Line of Thought*

The injunction of v.1 to restore someone who might have been overtaken in some transgression appears to be connected with 5,25 by the qualification “(brothers) you who are spiritual” and the mention of a “spirit of gentleness” but, it would seem, also with 5,26. After the first particular instruction in 5,26, we have in 6,1 what could be called a second concretization of the general command “let us walk by the Spirit” (5,25). Yet this command to restore in a spirit of gentleness appears to be the opposite of what is to be avoided according to 5,26: self-conceit, provocation and envy. In 6,1c, at the end of the sentence, a new idea suddenly appears: you yourself may be tempted. The second person singular, not the plural, is used emphatically.

The command “bear one another’s burdens” of 6,2a does not continue the warning of 6,1c; it repeats asyndetically, again in the plural, the injunction in v.1b. Although “burdens” certainly sums up the heavy cost of “restoring” a transgressor, that term may have other and wider connotations as well: all kinds of troubles which are present in the daily life of Christians, their struggles and pressures on them. In 6,2b it is stated, with much emphasis and with a view to the whole of Christian existence, that in this way, i.e., through a mutual carrying of the burdens, “the law of Christ” is fulfilled. Different from that in v.1b, the helping is now reciprocal.

Yet if a Christian wrongly thinks that he is something, he deludes himself. 6,3 probably motivates (γάρ) not v.2 but v.1c. The

<sup>(75)</sup> Cf. VANHOYE, “Paracèse et doctrine pauliniennes”, 207-209, on Paul’s “incohérence du langage et cohérence de la pensée” with, on 208, special attention to Gal 6,1-6.

danger of temptation is real. While helping one's brother, who in his weakness is overtaken by a transgression, a Christian may become imprudent and wrongly think that he is somebody; this, however, is pure self-deception. Here, too, a shift has occurred. In v. 1c, one spontaneously assumes that the Christian who "restores" may be tempted to sin in the same (or an analogous) way as the sinner. In v. 3b, Paul no longer mentions sin as such; he calls that wrong (and sinful) action "self-deceit".

The "anyone" of v. 3a becomes "each one" in v. 4. This verse offers, as it were, the key to the correct attitude of the Christian. Incorrect self-esteem is self-deceit (v. 3), but (δέ) let each one examine his own work and then, if that work proves to be valid, there may be room and ground for proper and legitimate boasting. Yet Paul's formulation is careful: the boasting concerns only that person himself, not the other. The cryptic expression "not regarding the other" presumably means that comparison with the other (and his work) has in any case to be avoided so that no contempt or provocation take place.

In v. 5 an explicit reason (γάρ) is now provided for moderation in boasting and avoiding pride which would despise the other: "Each one must bear his own load". The preceding context invites us to interpret "load" as the weaknesses and culpability of each Christian individually, as well as all kinds of difficulties and troubles. The bearing of this weight of adversities must take place in everyday life. V. 5 is not eschatological in the strict sense of the term.

In v. 6 Paul adds a corrective (δέ) and, rather unexpectedly, points to the specific duty of the Christian community to provide the material necessities of life and all kinds of assistance for those who teach the Word.

In this brief passage one notes a movement from mutual help to individual attentiveness, from the second person plural to the second and third person singular, and from "one another" to "each one". Verses 1-6 "develop the two main themes of personal accountability and corporate responsibility which constantly balance each other throughout this section" <sup>(76)</sup>. There does not appear to be an eschatological climax in v. 5. The pericope proper ends at v. 10 and vv. 7-10 are eschatological indeed. The contradiction between

<sup>(76)</sup> BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, 167.



v. 2 and v. 5 is more apparent than real. Mutual help evidently does not dispense one from personal responsibility; even with the help of others, every one still has to carry his own load.

### *Survey of Themes*

In Gal 6,1-6 there is obviously more than the twofold emphasis on mutual help and individual attentiveness. The consideration of the line of thought has shown us how coherent and direct Paul's reasoning is, whatever traditional material he may have employed. A thematic survey can point out a whole list of particular accents, all of them Pauline insights, warnings and guidelines. Our thematic approach will not so much point to the truths of timeless sayings. This final part of the study simply lists the surprisingly numerous concerns which a careful reading detects in this short passage.

1. For Paul, sin is not absent in Christian life. He reckons with possible transgressions. He refers to the eventuality that a Christian may "be overtaken" by a transgression; he may have purposely avoided an expression which would indicate outright sinning.

2. A Christian who falls into sin should not be left alone; such a person has to be restored by the community. Restoration, amendment and gentle solicitude are called for; no word of condemnation or punishment or banishment of the sinner is heard here.

3. In a commonsensical way Paul states that, in restoring the other, one has to be prudent and careful. He, too, can be tempted to sin just as the sinner. Although Christians are "Spirit led people" (cf. 5,18), their abiding frailty is realistically acknowledged.

4. The instruction to bear one another's burdens is very impressive. In a community of Christians mutual help is a strict commandment addressed to all members; it is a constant rule. Paul repeats what he already said in 5,13b.

5. Much emphasis is put on what follows: καὶ οὕτως ("and so, in this way"). Burden-bearing is the fulfilment of the law of Christ. In 5,14 Paul states that in one clause, "loving one's neighbor as oneself", the whole (Mosaic) law is fulfilled. In 6,2, two things become evident: for a follower of Christ, bearing the burdens of others is the essential part and, indeed, the whole of loving one's neighbor as oneself; and such a fulfilment of the redefined (Mosaic) law is at the same time the fulfilment of the law of Christ.

To be sure, Paul is not only thinking of what Christ demands; he also implicitly refers to Christ's example of bearing our burdens through his incarnation and his death on the cross.

6. Paul realistically reckons with the possibility that a Christian might wrongly think that he is something (cf. 1 Cor 1,26-31). It is stated very plainly that such a person deludes himself.

7. It may surprise us that Paul, immediately afterwards, admits a ground for legitimate boasting. Such a boasting, however, is only possible after a positive evaluation of one's own "work"; moreover, this can only occur with regard to oneself.

8. Avoidance of comparison with others is an added theme which is (most likely) hinted at by Paul (cf. 2 Cor 10,12). Boasting is by its nature public; yet it should never be accompanied by despising or provoking one's fellow Christian.

9. Paul shows a realistic insight into the moral identity of each Christian. In addition to qualities or virtues and a valid "work", there is also always the individual "load" — the daily struggle of life, all kinds of pressures, even weaknesses and sin — which each must bear, not losing heart while doing good as long as one has the opportunity (cf. 6,9-10).

10. Paul's last thought in this brief passage concerns a practical problem in the Christian community: because teachers of the Word are not able to make a decent living, they must be given a share "in all good things" by those who are taught.

One is struck by the multitude and variety of themes in 6,1-6. In a few sentences Paul succeeds in offering (not a complete, yet) a balanced concretization of Christian spirituality and behavior. All ten themes in this list have to do either with community life or personal behavior. They are guidelines and directives which are meant for instruction or for application to the concrete daily life of Galatian Christians<sup>(77)</sup>.

<sup>(77)</sup> For the relevance of Paul's moral instruction, see BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, esp. 22-23, 36-74, 150-155, 167-170 and 217-218. Barclay duly cautions about the dangers connected with "mirror-reading". However, in view of 5,15 and 5,26, as well as the eight vices in 5,19-21 pointing to infighting, he notes "that there is sufficient evidence for communal strife in the Galatian churches and that this may well be the best context in which to understand the various maxims gathered in 5.25-6.10" (154).

Gal 6,1-6 is part of the major parenetical section 5,13–6,10. Christ has set us free from the law; we should not allow ourselves to become slaves again (5,1-12). Yet this freedom cannot be an excuse for living according to the flesh. We who belong to Christ and live by the Spirit have to follow the lead of the Spirit. We must love one another, bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. At the same time, however, each of us must take care of himself and test his own work. We should not delude ourselves: God cannot be cheated. Let us not become tired of doing good. Let us sow in the field of the Spirit; God is the master of the eschatological harvest.

Within Gal 5,13–6,10 the subunit 6,1-6 contains a very coherent argument. The unifying factor is the interweaving of mutual help and individual attentiveness, two complementary injunctions which throughout the manifold themes dominate Paul's parenesis in these verses. To be sure, various originally non-Christian ethical sayings are present. But Paul integrates them in a strict flow of thought. J. Dunn appropriately stresses that whatever their origin may be, "the source of motivation (the Spirit – 5,25) and the norm of behaviour (Christ – 6,2) are distinctively Christian" <sup>(78)</sup>.

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## SUMMARY

The three problems investigated in this study are: Is there a coherent argument in Galatians 6,1-6? Does v. 4 admit rightful boasting? To what extent is v. 5 eschatological? The coherence is confirmed by the global consideration of both context and text, as well as by the exegesis of the individual verses (against H. D. Betz and J. C. O'Neill). Between v. 1 and v. 2 there is no qualitative shift from sinful actions to radical sinfulness; in vv. 3-4 Paul opposes wrong boasting to a possible rightful boasting that, however, does not allow comparison with others (against G. Klein). One's "own load" in v. 5 points to everyday worries (against D. W. Kuck). The unifying factor in this text is the interweaving of the two complementary injunctions, mutual help and individual attentiveness, which dominate Paul's exegesis in 6,1-6.

<sup>(78)</sup> *Galatians*, 316.

## Canonical-Critical Perspective and the Relationship of Colossians and Ephesians

### I. Introduction

Canonical criticism is a critical methodology of recent provenance. Although examination of the canon, including its historical formation, has existed for centuries, canonical criticism needs to be distinguished from discussion of what is usually called canonical formation. The genesis of the method is found in the work of the Old Testament scholars Brevard Childs and James Sanders. It was Sanders who apparently initiated recent discussion of the topic with his work *Torah and Canon*<sup>(1)</sup>. Since that time, Childs has not only written his magisterial work on the Old Testament but has completed a full introduction to the New Testament from his canonical approach<sup>(2)</sup>. These two scholars do not take the same approach to the issues involved, although they share a number of common assumptions. This paper is not designed to mediate the serious disputes between the major practitioners of canonical criticism, neither is it an attempt to offer definitive solutions to the problem of the relationship between Colossians and Ephesians from a canonical-critical perspective. To date, the major work in canonical criticism has been in the area of Old Testament. Recent work on the New Testament has only been of a general sort, choosing to deal with broad ideas and the sweep of the canonical process rather than with particular books and passages. The few exceptions are concerned with the book of Acts, Revelation, and the fourfold Gospel<sup>(3)</sup>. This

<sup>(1)</sup> J. A. SANDERS, *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia 1972). Cf. J. BARR, *Holy Scripture. Canon, Authority, Criticism* (Oxford 1983) 156; J. A. SANDERS, *Canon and Community. A Guide to Canonical Criticism* (Philadelphia 1984) 61.

<sup>(2)</sup> B. S. CHILDS, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia 1979); id., *The New Testament as Canon. An Introduction* (Philadelphia 1994 [1984]).

<sup>(3)</sup> See, for example, R. W. WALL and E. E. LEMCIO, *The New Testament as Canon. A Reader in Canonical Criticism* (JSNTSS 76; Sheffield 1992).

situation raises two surprising points. The first is the relatively small number of scholars who have undertaken canonical criticism. This is surprising especially in a climate of New Testament study where scholars often enthusiastically embrace new and even speculative methods (witness the growth, for example, in literary and social-scientific criticism)<sup>(4)</sup>. The second is the consequent fact that there are a number of books in the New Testament where there has been virtually no serious work done by canonical criticism. There has been some work on the multiple letter canon<sup>(5)</sup>, but even here the letters to the Colossians and Ephesians do not play a significant role. Theological issues seem to be more important. Despite the numerous problems associated with Colossians and Ephesians — and the problems are numerous, including those of authorship, purpose, structure, destination, and theology<sup>(6)</sup> — the silence is palpable, and needs to be addressed. In the light of the fact that there has been no sustained analysis of the relationship of Colossians and Ephesians from the standpoint of canonical criticism, this paper attempts to define a workable model of what we will call a canonical-critical perspective<sup>(7)</sup>, and apply it to these two letters in the Pauline corpus. The goal is not to provide definitive canonical-critical readings but to suggest possible solutions to critical issues and to subject these to necessary scrutiny.

## II. Definition of a Canonical-Critical Perspective: Approach, Process, or What?

There is ambiguity even in the very definition of canonical criticism. This ambiguity is caused by the fact that the two major

(4) See S. E. PORTER—D. TOMBS (eds.), *Approaches to New Testament Study* (JSNTSS 120; Sheffield 1995).

(5) See WALL—LEMCIO, *New Testament as Canon*, 161-207 on the multiple letter canon, and 335-360 on Ephesus.

(6) See, for example, A. T. LINCOLN, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas 1990) xxxv-xcvii.

(7) We choose this term for three reasons. First, it shows an incorporation of the best elements of canonical criticism. Secondly, it fully incorporates the use of historical and other criticisms. Thirdly, it is seen to be a perspective, in other words, a method of interpretation that can be used in conjunction with other critical methods, without making absolute claims to priority or preeminence.

proponents of the method or methods, Childs and Sanders, have clearly distinguishable views of what constitutes canonical criticism. Sanders identifies less with the finished form of the text and more with the historical process involved in its formation; whereas Childs distances himself from the term canonical criticism and labels his method a canonical approach<sup>(8)</sup>. Thus, before it is possible to see what a canonical-critical perspective might have to offer to an analysis of Colossians and Ephesians, it is necessary to provide a brief discussion of the distinguishing features of its two major schools of thought. In the light of these major features, it will then be possible to draw out several significant guidelines to aid in interpretation.

*In nuce*, canonical criticism seeks as its primary goal to interpret the New Testament in its canonical context and in relationship to the believing community of faith. The two primary foci of this definition are revealed in the approaches of Childs and Sanders, that is, in the interpretation of the text as an entire document within its canonical context, and seeing this text in its relationship to the church. One way of looking at the major differences in their work is that Sanders emphasizes the process of canonical formation, with concern for the historical process by which a text was formed and how this text helped to control the formation of other and subsequent texts within the biblical tradition. Childs, on the other hand, emphasizes the final form of the text, although he would claim that he does not want to neglect the historical process (others are not as convinced that he allows for the historical process in his criticism)<sup>(9)</sup>, Childs looks at the canonical text as it stands within the biblical canon. He examines the shape of that canon and how its individual parts reflect the interests of the canonical community of faith and how these emphases serve as

<sup>(8)</sup> See SANDERS, *Canon and Community*, 19; and CHILDS, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 82.

<sup>(9)</sup> See, for example, M.C. PARSONS, "Canonical Criticism", *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation* (eds. D.A. BLACK-D.S. DOCKERY) (Grand Rapids 1991) 259. However, others think that Childs is more dependent upon historical criticism than he is willing to admit, possibly to the point of inconsistency and lack of coherence. See BARR, *Holy Scripture*, appendix II; id., "Childs' Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture", *JSOT* 16 (1980) 15; M.G. BRETT, *Biblical Criticism in Crisis? The Impact of the Canonical Approach on Old Testament Studies* (Cambridge 1991) 27.

guidelines for interpretation. Both of these authors are concerned with the believing community, although this community is viewed in different terms. For Sanders the believing community is the community of faith over the centuries as it is involved in the creation, interpretation and reinterpretation of its sacred documents, with previous Scripture serving as the material for subsequent reflection and reinterpretation. For Childs the believing community is the community of faith that has had and continues to use the canonical text, that is, in terms of how the text as it is passed down from generation to generation maintains the theological values of the community, especially the early church. Childs views the text more as a static text, sacred in the final form that it has come down to us in the believing community, with his approach tending to emphasize the literary dimensions of its final form, with less regard for the historical factors attendant upon its formation and development. Sanders, on the other hand, approaches the canon as a form of changing and evolving tradition, reflecting a community's continuing struggle with its theological identity. This process began with the early Israelites and continued into the early church, and is seen by Sanders as continuing in the contemporary church as well. The contemporary church can then use the biblical text as a paradigm of how to interpret its tradition in the light of a contemporary context. The polarities between the two positions are evident. For Childs the biblical text itself provides the context for interpretation, since this is the text that retains and displays the final redactional features, while for Sanders the process by which the tradition was passed down and reinterpreted gives the contemporary church its own hermeneutical framework for interpretation.

In view of what has been said above, it may seem difficult to find a middle ground that is faithful to these varying emphases. This has not proved easy, since the two scholars themselves have wished to remain separate. Wall has attempted one such reconciliation by positing what he calls a canonical-community criticism. He draws attention to the fundamental importance of the final product of the church's canonizing process (that is, the canon *per se*) for the life of the church, while interpreting it in the light of the fluid and dynamic reading of the Bible that took place within previous believing communities<sup>(10)</sup>. But Wall's canonical-community criticism is still not a

(10) WALL—LEMCIO, *New Testament as Canon*, 142, n. 2; 161, n. 2 and *passim*.

true synthesis, since it simply reiterates and repeats what has been said by the two major proponents, without saying how the two fit together in a methodologically coherent way. Does the emphasis rest upon the historical process, or does it rest upon the final form? Is the emphasis upon the development of the text as the various believing communities continued to reinterpret (and possibly misinterpret) their tradition, or is the emphasis to be upon the final canonical text, one that has already either incorporated or rejected such miscues?

Before attempting to define our canonical-critical perspective, perhaps it is wise to indicate what it is that canonical criticism is attempting to overcome. Despite their several differences, both Childs and Sanders have perceived the common need to move beyond traditional historical criticism to address some of its shortcomings in order to continue to have a biblical text that speaks to a community of faith. There are at least four major shortcomings of the historical-critical method that canonical criticism attempts to address. First, historical criticism is traditionally seen to break up the unity of the text. This atomism works in two ways. On the one hand, it tends to lose the unity of, for example, the individual Testaments, the synoptic Gospels or the thirteen-letter Pauline canon. On the other hand, this emphasis upon diversity has tended also to lose the unity of individual documents, so that source and form criticism have become standard fare in much New Testament study. Not only is a given book broken into its individual pericopes, but attention is often given to individual words within these pericopes, with the larger text often lost sight of. Redaction criticism has perhaps mediated some of this difficulty, but it has often done so at the expense of appreciation of the entire text, emphasizing instead the individual tendencies of a given author or redactor<sup>(1)</sup>.

Secondly, at the end of the day, when it comes to a number of issues, including such things as authorship, historical context, dating, audience, etc., some of the conclusions of historical criticism are admittedly speculative. One of the great frustrations with the

(1) All of these tendencies can be found to varying degrees in, for example, R. BULTMANN, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. J. Marsh; Oxford 21968); N. PERRIN, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia 1970). Some of the problems with traditional criticism have been raised by H. PALMER, *The Logic of Gospel Criticism* (London 1968).



historical-critical method has been that a large amount of time and energy has been devoted to investigating these issues, with the idea that they are of great importance for interpretation, but the tentativeness of the conclusions has led to a paralysis in the church<sup>(12)</sup>. The result has been the development of a two-tiered system of interpretation, in which historical criticism has flourished, with its results being utilized where possible, but in which those who are involved in the life of the church undertake their own work, often with little regard for the conclusions of higher criticism.

Thirdly, and following on from the second point above, the historical-critical method has been seen by many to have removed the Bible from the church and put it firmly into the scholar's study<sup>(13)</sup>. This would not be a bad thing in and of itself if the Bible ever made its way back to the church with increased understanding, but that, so the criticism goes, has not been the case. The Bible, consequently, has become the object of critical scrutiny by the scholarly community without a return on the investment being enjoyed by those in the pews. The shock that parishioners have often had when they glimpse into the scholar's study and see that their traditional verities have long been considered passé has led to a great amount of skepticism regarding the benefit of this kind of criticism, as well as with regard to the value of the Bible itself.

Fourthly, in its concern for exegesis of the history behind and around the text, the text itself has been rendered of lesser importance<sup>(14)</sup>. The analogy has often been used that the text is a window, through which one looks into the ancient world. To

<sup>(12)</sup> An example might be found in the skepticism of much Historical Jesus research. For example, E. P. Sanders begins his discussion with eight "almost indisputable facts". He has no place for any sayings of Jesus as assumed to be indisputable. See E. P. SANDERS, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia 1985), esp. 11. A more extreme example would be the skepticism of the Jesus Seminar, where even the parables are for the most part seen to be inauthentic. See R. W. FUNK–B. B. SCOTT–J. R. BUTTS (eds.), *The Parables of Jesus* (Sonoma, CA, 1988).

<sup>(13)</sup> This appears to have been a significant trend ever since the radically historical but philosophically-motivated work of F. C. Baur. See W. G. KÜMMEL, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems* (Nashville 1972) 133-143.

<sup>(14)</sup> For a discussion of some of the issues related to this, see J. M. G. BARCLAY, "Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case", *JSNT* 31 (1987) 73-93.

continue the analogy, the cleaner the window, that is, the less that it gets in the way of one's vision, the more benefit it is and the less hindrance there is to seeing what is behind it or on the other side. In this kind of a picture, the text itself consequently becomes a pretext for other issues, often seen to be of greater importance. Whether these actually are of greater importance or not, especially to a believing community, is a matter of debate, but the appearance is that such issues as the historical setting, the surrounding culture, the religious climate of the times, etc., are given at least as much importance as what the given author might have been saying. In fact, the author's statements are often seen simply as one half of a conversation, with the important item of investigation being the unheard other partner in the dialogue.

Perhaps a better way to approach what might be called a canonical-critical perspective is by recognizing the following factors.

1. A canonical-critical perspective tends to look at the text holistically, canonically or in its final form<sup>(15)</sup>, although without neglecting its historicity. In other words, the larger context forms the exegetical basis for the smaller units comprised of such things as words, sentences, pericopes, etc.<sup>(16)</sup>. However, one cannot neglect the fact that this canonical text results from a historical process where the reinterpretation of previous tradition has occurred, even if within the confines of the believing community<sup>(17)</sup>. In this sense, a canonical-critical perspective is akin to tradition criticism, since it is concerned with how a given tradition is transmitted and reinterpreted within the process of the evolving and developing thought of the community of faith. Although Childs claims to distance his view, at least to some extent, from the historical process, especially tradition or midrashic criticism, his own motif analysis (as for example the use of apocalyptic in Daniel and Thessalonians, or the author of Revelation as a modern-day Ezekiel) betrays such an interest and concern<sup>(18)</sup>.

(15) See CHILDS, *New Testament as Canon*, 48-53; WALL-LEMCIO, *New Testament as Canon*, esp. 274-275 and Wall's following discussion of Revelation.

(16) There are similarities here to discourse analysis. For an introduction, see S.E. PORTER-D.A. CARSON (eds.), *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek* (JSNTSS 113; Sheffield 1995) 14-116.

(17) See SANDERS, *Torah and Canon*, xv.

(18) See CHILDS, *New Testament as Canon*, 509.

2. A canonical-critical perspective focuses on and emphasizes the most objective evidence that is available for exegesis and understanding, the biblical text<sup>(19)</sup>. Whereas matters of historical reconstruction are stimulated by appreciating the evidence that is brought to light by the biblical text, according to a canonical-critical perspective the biblical text is the primary evidence that should control not only reconstruction but interpretation itself. When it comes to interpretation, one must ask oneself how such an interpretation is evaluated. For most historical reconstructions this is determined on the basis of probabilities, weighing various scenarios against each other, and checking them against what objective evidence we have. In terms of biblical interpretation, the biblical text itself is such a piece of objective evidence, and must be given its due place in the interpretative process.

3. Interpretation of the biblical text is placed within the context of the believing Christian community. This is and traditionally has been the normative context for interpretation<sup>(20)</sup>. Thus, as opposed to historical criticism, the Bible is returned by means of a canonical-critical perspective to the church, where it has always been interpreted. It is only since the Enlightenment that the Bible has been a document of academic and scholarly scrutiny apart from the interpretation of the church, and a canonical-critical perspective, while wanting readily to embrace the worthwhile accomplishments of previous generations of critics, does not want to neglect an even longer-standing tradition that the primary burden of interpretation is within the church. It is within this context that the vast majority of interpreters have traditionally been trained, and it is within the church that the findings of interpretation are to be applied, so far as theological interests are concerned.

(19) The emphasis of exegesis has always been (or should be) on the text, at least as much as any other area of investigation. See, for example, one of the best discussions of exegetical methodology not from the standpoint of canonical criticism: H. CONZELMANN–A. LINDEMANN, *Interpreting the New Testament. An Introduction to the Principles and Methods of New Testament Exegesis* (Peabody 1988), esp. parts one and three.

(20) Virtually any discussion of the history of biblical criticism makes this point clear. See, for example, R. GRANT–D. TRACY, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible* (London <sup>2</sup>1984 [1963]), esp. 39-40; E. C. BLACKMAN, *Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia 1957) 108-129.

4. A canonical-critical perspective is concerned to look at the text as text rather than using it for some other purpose. It is not that the biblical text cannot be used to aid in all sorts of endeavours, including serving as important evidence for understanding the ancient world. But to place these interests above the issue of looking at the text itself as a suitable and sufficient item of interpretation is to lose sight of one's priorities. According to a canonical-critical perspective, the Bible should be returned to its place of centre stage, that is, as the first and last object of critical scrutiny within the believing community<sup>(21)</sup>.

A number of issues remain unsettled within the field of canonical criticism, however. There are several issues that must be examined in more detail, but have been either neglected or even rejected by canonical critics. The first is the issue of what constitutes the canon. As most canonical critics admit, there have been various canons arrived at by various churches<sup>(22)</sup>. Whereas much of the language is in terms of the 'canon', as if this is a settled and singularly defined corpus, there are in fact several different canons in existence in various churches. This has several implications. One is that the supposed objectivity of this canon for interpretation is called into question, since disparate groups will be bringing various biblical books to bear on any given interpretative issue. Another is that this reveals something of the subjectivity involved in the entire canonical process of formation and development.

Secondly, as suggested above, there is looseness with regard to how the term 'canon' is used. Are we referring to a process that

<sup>(21)</sup> This is a point at which a canonical-critical perspective has close ties to New Criticism or formalist interpretation. For discussion of this, see S.E. PORTER, "Literary Approaches to the New Testament: From Formalism to Deconstruction and Back", *Approaches to New Testament Study* (eds. S.E. PORTER–D. TOMBS) (JSNTSS 120; Sheffield 1995) 77-131.

<sup>(22)</sup> The issue of the formation of the canon of the New Testament has produced several important works. See especially A. SOUTER, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament* (London 1912) 149-204, with a useful collection of primary texts on 205-237; F.F. BRUCE, *The Canon of Scripture* (Glasgow 1988) 117-349; B.M. METZGER, *The Canon of the New Testament. Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford 1987) *passim*; L.M. McDONALD, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (Peabody 1995) *passim*. For a recent assessment of the Muratorian fragment, see G.M. HAHNEMAN, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford 1992), though he is far from entirely convincing.

took three to four centuries to unfold or are we talking of a product formed in the fourth or fifth century? This raises the issue of why this process or why this period of time should be determinative for subsequent Christianity. For example, when the various canonical lists are consulted, we find that there are differences of opinion among these lists, even though within a given tradition we may no longer have a flexible or open canon. Furthermore, there is the question of why the fourth century is the apparent focus of authority. Why were those lists written during this time considered definitive? There were many misjudgments made at this time or earlier, such as attributing the letter to the Hebrews to Paul, a decision that virtually no scholar follows today<sup>(23)</sup>. If scholars are willing to depart from the findings of the canonical lists at this point, should they not be willing to do the same in other areas? In other words, why is it that the concept of ‘canon’ is invoked so easily in some ways while neglected in others?

Thirdly, there is the problem of authorship and pseudonymity<sup>(24)</sup>. For such canonical critics as Childs and Wall, the issue of authorship is said to be unimportant<sup>(25)</sup>. In fact, these scholars state that it is of no consequence that pseudonymous writings are included in the New Testament, on the grounds that these texts are enshrined in the canon, that is, included on theological grounds. But this raises several questions. On the one hand, this suggests to them a distinction between the historical Paul and the canonical Paul<sup>(26)</sup>. The historical Paul may well have been a very different man from the one who wrote the letters found in the New Testament. In fact, it may well be possible that we know very little about the historical Paul, especially if some of the letters attributed to him in the New Testament were not written by him. However, this distinction between the historical and the canonical Paul is

<sup>(23)</sup> See D. GUTHRIE, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove 1970) 685–698.

<sup>(24)</sup> See S. E. PORTER, “Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: Implications for Canon”, *BBRes* 5 (1995) 105–123.

<sup>(25)</sup> CHILDS, *New Testament as Canon*, 52; R. WALL, “Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: A Response to S. E. Porter”, *BBRes* 5 (1995) 125–128; responded to by S. E. PORTER, “Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: A Response to R. W. Wall’s Response”, *BBRes* 6 (1996) 133–138.

<sup>(26)</sup> CHILDS, *New Testament as Canon*, 223.

not one that the early church apparently knew. When the canonical lists were being recorded, those drawing up the lists were not apparently concerned to distinguish between the historical Paul and the canonical Paul, since the historical Paul was the canonical Paul. The letters commonly attributed to him, including Hebrews in some churches, were thought to have been written by the man Paul himself. On the other hand, this reveals a discrepancy in the way that the concept of canon is used. The concept of canon has a historical dimension to it when it is being used as a way of justifying much canonical criticism, that is, as a control on the text and how it is to be interpreted. But those responsible for the formulation of these canonical lists were viewing the contents of that list essentially in terms of authorship, including authorship by Paul of a number of books. It seems to be an inconsistency, therefore, to say on the one hand that canonical formation is determinative for interpretation but that authorship does not matter and that pseudepigraphs can be included within the canon. The two seem to go together. If one accepts the canonical lists as reflecting the canon of the church, it would seem that one is obligated to accept the view that Paul was the author of at least the books with his name, since they were included in these lists on this ground. Thus the issue of pseudonymity, and with it the issue of deception regarding the process of canonical formation, is a very important one for canonical criticism, but one that has not been squarely faced. Furthermore, those canonical critics who push aside historical criticism fail to see the significance of these very points.

Fourthly, canonical criticism in forms that have become widely adopted, especially by some areas of conservative scholarship, gives lip-service to the importance of historical criticism but ends up relegating it to a less important status, invoking it only where it is convenient. The result is that canonical criticism provides a convenient shelter for those who would like to be accepted by the critical community while not having to follow the results of critical scholarship. One outcome of this is an emphasis on scriptural unity, a position tending to preserve a high view of Scripture. For some, this attractiveness is seen to be a weakness<sup>(27)</sup>, although this is not necessarily a problem. In defense of Childs, in and of itself he cannot be held responsible for those whom his method attracts.

(27) BARR, *Holy Scripture*, appendix II.

Nevertheless, one can judge a method at least in part on the basis of the uses or abuses made of it by others, that is, in relation to how susceptible it is to misappropriation.

Fifthly, at the end of the day, canonical criticism has yet to come forward with a definable and clear method that is seen to offer useful readings of biblical texts. On the one hand, Childs appears to be the clearest in presenting what he considers important to his method<sup>(28)</sup>, although his method has been taken up by those who have ended up minimizing the importance of higher criticism. On the other hand, Sanders's method appears to be more promising so far as his general statements regarding the importance of historical criticism are concerned, but he is short on specifics regarding exegesis<sup>(29)</sup>. And there is the final question of how these two methods, as different as they are in approach, can be harmonized into a working model of canonical criticism. In fact, is it even legitimate for them to be harmonized, or should they be considered different critical methods? So far the results have not been overly productive, despite the fact that many have adopted some of the general orientations of the approach.

Although the picture painted above does not seem to be overwhelmingly optimistic that canonical criticism can provide a way forward in interpretation, one should not be overly pessimistic. Methods do not emerge fully formed, but are refined in their use. This was true of the historical-critical method, and may well be true for canonical criticism as well. A method is tested on the basis of two major factors, both its methodological soundness and its practical results. Although canonical methodology is still developing, enough of what we are calling a canonical-critical perspective has emerged so that it can be utilized in a dialectical way that helps to refine the method itself, as well as to offer new or increased understanding of several texts. Since next to nothing has been offered in terms of interpretation of Colossians and Ephesians, here is an area where no substantive evaluation of canonical criticism can be given until such an attempt is made.

<sup>(28)</sup> It must be noted that Childs's methodology is explained on only six pages out of over 500 pages in his *New Testament as Canon*, 48-53. See BARR, "Childs' Introduction", 13, regarding Childs's work on the Old Testament lacking the same methodological rigour.

<sup>(29)</sup> One looks in vain for a methodological statement in Sanders's work. See BARR, *Holy Scripture*, appendix II.

### III. A Canonical-Critical Perspective and Colossians and Ephesians

Although the number of issues to consider regarding Colossians and Ephesians is large, we confine our discussion to three that seem to be of greatest relevance. What we will not do is offer a definitive interpretation of the importance and significance of each of these, but instead we will offer various ways in which they might be understood from a canonical-critical perspective. Other canonical critics might well take other approaches and arrive at different conclusions. But the attempt here is being offered as a way of seeing how a form of canonical criticism is practised, and to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the method on the basis of the productivity of the understandings that it helps to create.

#### 1. *Authorship*

Authorship is a particularly difficult topic to begin with, since it is fraught with emotion. It is amazing how much unclear thinking goes on with regard to authorship in New Testament studies<sup>(30)</sup>. But it is an inevitable issue to confront with regard to Colossians and Ephesians, since probably the majority of scholars do not accept their authenticity<sup>(31)</sup>. There are at least two major ways that a canonical-critical perspective can approach the issue of authorship of these letters. It must be kept in mind, however, that no canonical critic known to us actually considers the issue of authorship of these letters together. Virtually always, they are considered individually if at all.

The first view is one that has been promoted by Childs and many of his followers<sup>(32)</sup>. The argument (as mentioned above) asserts that a distinction must be made between the canonical Paul and the historical Paul. The canonical Paul is the Paul found in the canonical corpus, the author whose name stands written at the beginning of thirteen letters (although some canonical lists attribute

<sup>(30)</sup> See, for example, LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, lx-lxii, where he discusses his own change of mind, as well as that of H. Schlier.

<sup>(31)</sup> The question of how relevant it is whether a majority of scholars accept any position is worth reconsidering. More to the point would be how many accept authenticity or not after serious consideration of the issues.

<sup>(32)</sup> See CHILDS, *New Testament as Canon*, 322-328.



Hebrews to him as well). The canonical process has included all thirteen letters as the letters that represent and testify to the message of Paul, and it is this group of letters as the witness of Paul that must be considered. Paul is the subject of such testimony, in the sense that he is the one who proclaims this message through his writings to the church of his time and to our own.

The historical Paul, on the other hand, is the Paul who is reconstructed by scholarship on the basis of his letters and what else is known of him from the New Testament, such as Acts, and other evidence from the ancient world. According to canonical criticism as argued by Childs, it is not the reconstructed author of the biblical text but the canonical figure who emerges as the object of study. According to the best work of historical criticism, Paul cannot be affirmed as the author of a number of the books that are attributed to him in the New Testament. Included among these are Colossians and Ephesians, besides the Pastorals and 2 Thessalonians. One is faced with the issue of how to understand the relationship between these two factors. Is priority to be given to the historical data or to the canonical data? For traditional historical criticism the issue is adjudicated on the basis of the historical criteria, and Pauline authorship of these writings is often jettisoned. Therefore, in the light of this finding, the writings that are not Pauline are not placed at the centre of New Testament and Pauline study, but they are put at the periphery, not quite the full authentic Pauline message, but the words of a later interpreter.

As Childs says with regard to Ephesians,

such an approach has turned the purpose of the New Testament canon on its head and badly misconstrued its theological function. The primary issue is not whether or not Ephesians is Pauline. The canonical process has already incorporated it within the Pauline corpus. Rather, the exegetical issue is to determine the effect which the inclusion of the letter has on its shape and on the understanding of the corpus. The canonical decision has rendered a theological judgment as to what constitutes the 'canonical Paul'. Although it remains a valid and important question to consider the relation between the 'canonical' and the 'historical' Paul, the two entities cannot be identified, nor can the latter determination establish the parameters of the former. The function of canon is to establish the shape of the vehicle through which the true Pauline witness to the gospel is made<sup>(33)</sup>.

<sup>(33)</sup> CHILDS, *New Testament as Canon*, 323.

Wall adds further clarification to this (albeit speaking of Revelation), when he says modern scholarship tends 'to confuse historical quests after apostolic authors with the church's recognition of a book's apostolicity and canonicity'. The assumption that an apostle must have written a particular work

since its inspiration and canonicity depend upon it is simply wrong. The apostolicity or trustworthiness of the content of a New Testament writing (many of which are anonymous or quite possibly pseudonymous) is determined by a *theological* rather than a historical perspective. In applying the criterion of apostolicity, earliest Christianity was *fundamentally concerned with the congruence of a book's message with its memory of the apostle's witness to Christ* [emphasis ours]. In this sense, the issue at stake in whether to include [a given book in the New Testament canon] was not a question of authorship; rather, at issue was whether its message comported well with the theological tradition [the apostle] 'founded' <sup>(34)</sup>.

The canonical-critical perspective offers a second and contrasting approach to the issue of authorship. This view argues that the historical and canonical issues cannot be separated but must be held together, because they were held together by the early church and those involved in the canonical process. Rather than splitting the canonical and historical Paul, the canonical-critical perspective asserts that for the early church there was only ever the historical Paul who was seen to be the author of the canonical letters. This does not deny that there were some letters, such as Hebrews, that were disputed in the early church. But it is important to note that Hebrews, along with the other *anonymous* writings, such as the Gospels and the Johannine letters, are of a different sort than the letters of Paul, where authorship is directly attributed. In the case of Hebrews the early church was ambivalent regarding its status, but finally decided upon Pauline authorship in the light of historical and theological factors <sup>(35)</sup>. In other words, these two factors were clearly subordinate to the authorship issue, otherwise Hebrews (lacking a clear attestation) would probably have been included more readily, along with the other Pauline writings.

<sup>(34)</sup> WALL-LEMCIO, *New Testament as Canon*, 285.

<sup>(35)</sup> D.A. CARSON-D.J. MOO-L. MORRIS, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids 1992) 394-395.

The case with the Pauline letters is different still. So far as the indications from the early church can be discovered, the ascription of Pauline authorship was the major factor for their inclusion, in fact, quite possibly the only factor (e.g. Philemon). At the least it was the overwhelmingly decisive factor. So far as the evidence of the early church indicates, authorship was of crucial importance, such that there is no clear case of a known pseudonymous work being admitted into the New Testament canon<sup>(36)</sup>. It is true that there were some works that were accepted for a time, and that there were other works that were debated before they were admitted or rejected, but in the end there is no clear instance of a pseudonymous work being incorporated. On the other hand, there are plenty of instances of works that were found to be pseudonymous clearly being rejected, usually along with their writers, if this was discovered. It was on the primary basis of authorship that these works were included in or excluded from the canon. With this in mind, a canonical-critical perspective would argue that in deciding the issue of authorship, canonical formation and process are important, when used in conjunction with historical criticism. This perspective leaves the canonical critic with two possible resolutions to the tension between canonical affirmation and (supposed) non-Pauline authorship. For those canonical critics who are persuaded by arguments for non-Pauline authorship of Ephesians, the first solution is to be faithful to the function of the canonical process and reject the letters from the canon, in the light of the fact that they have been determined to be non-Pauline. Since all of the letters in the canonical group of Pauline letters were included on the basis of their Pauline authorship, once it has been determined that they are not by Paul, they must be rejected from the canon to retain canonical integrity. The second possible solution for canonical critics is to reject the findings of higher criticism regarding authorship in the light of canonical formation. By this reckoning, one must admit that the findings of historical criticism may well not be the final word in determining any issue including authorship, and that since these findings (being tentative and changeable) run contrary to the canonical process, they must be rejected and the

<sup>(36)</sup> L.R. DONELSON, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (HermUnT 22; Tübingen 1986) 11. According to Donelson, this applies to any canon of an author in the ancient Greco-Roman world.

canonical status of the Pauline letters be affirmed. In this case, canonical authority rests with the texts on the basis of authorship (where authorship is claimed), not with the canonizing agents<sup>(37)</sup>.

## 2. *Prescript of Ephesians*

Since the earliest and arguably best manuscripts of Ephesians do not have the words 'in Ephesus' in them<sup>(38)</sup>, this has raised a number of issues regarding the original audience, as well as the purpose and shape of the letter. Although earlier interpreters, as well as a few recent ones, would still want to argue that the letter was originally addressed only to the Ephesians, this is not widely held<sup>(39)</sup>. Since the phrasing with the participle of εἰμί and without the place of destination is unnatural Greek (including the Greek of Paul)<sup>(40)</sup>, this has prompted much speculation. The two major views are that the letter was a form of circular letter that was addressed to a number of churches in Asia Minor, or that formed the lead letter to a collection of Pauline letters, with each recipient of the collection to insert its church's name, or that the letter was the mysterious

(37) The question of the gospels raises a new set of issues, because of the ascriptions appended to them apparently quite early (possibly in the mid second century). The first issue to recognize is that the gospels themselves do not make an explicit claim to authorship. Secondly, no matter what those who later ascribed authorship to the gospels said, the authority of the gospels rests with their own textual integrity, not with what those later did with them. If deception is involved in their incorporation into the canon, the fault rests not with the texts but with those who attempted to deceive.

(38) See B. M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the New Testament* (London 21994) *ad loc.*

(39) See E. BEST, "Ephesians i.1", *Text and Interpretation* (FS. M. Black; [eds. E. BEST–R. McL. WILSON] Cambridge 1979) 29-41; id., "Recipients and Title of the Letter to the Ephesians: Why and When the Designation 'Ephesians'?", ANRW II.25.4 (Berlin 1987) 3247-3273.

(40) See F. BLASS–A. DEBRUNNER, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (trans. R. W. Funk; Chicago 1961) §413(3), who state that "The ptc. ὄν can only be used when there are other adjuncts to the predicate... otherwise it must be omitted... therefore E[ph.] 1:1... is impossible". A problem raised regarding the phrasing of the prescript is the apparently otiose καί. This is less of a problem if καί is adverbial, to be translated 'even/indeed the faithful in Christ Jesus'. Adjunctive material is included in other Pauline prescripts, for example, Phil 1,1 with σύν...

Laodicean letter (Col 4,16)<sup>(41)</sup>. Canonical criticism has not squarely confronted many of the major issues raised by this text-critical problem (or other issues, for that matter), especially in the light of previous speculation regarding it<sup>(42)</sup>.

According to the canonical criticism of Childs and Wall and Lemcio, one of the ways to approach Ephesians is to begin with the recognition that the letter was not written by Paul. It was written by a later Pauline follower, perhaps even after the authentic Pauline letters had been gathered together. The letter was written with the idea of generalizing the Pauline teaching for a much larger audience. Consequently, the letter was written without the place of destination, as well as without the kinds of personal comments such as greetings that are associated with the authentic Pauline letters. This was then part of its initial entry into the canonical process, as a general letter applying Pauline teaching to a much larger sphere of influence. The difficulty, however, is created by the fact that 'in Ephesus' was added later. This obviously was added sometime between the letter's having been written, perhaps in the late first or early second century, and the fifth century, when 'in Ephesus' is in the textual tradition and virtually all of the canonical lists include a letter by Paul to the Ephesians<sup>(43)</sup>. On the one hand, the prescript places the letter within the Pauline letter corpus, but on the other hand this limitation of place tends to work contrary to the generalized canonical application of the original letter, since it focuses the letter upon a particular place. As Childs says,

the present reference to the Ephesian church reflected a later canonical stage when the letter had been collected within the Pauline corpus. Whether or not the original letter once designated a specific congregation, the canonical form served to generalize the addressee in a manner commensurate with the context of the epistle, which is directed to the newly baptized in Christ. The subsequent addition of

<sup>(41)</sup> See M.D. GOULDER, "The Visionaries of Laodicea", *JSNT* 43 (1991) 16.

<sup>(42)</sup> Although Childs does not overtly reject textual criticism, he appears to accept later additions and accretions (e.g. the longer ending of Mark) as playing a significant role in canonical interpretation. Not only is this questionable in the light of the canons of textual criticism, but it diverts attention from the original text to later forms of the text.

<sup>(43)</sup> As early as P<sup>46</sup> there is the title "to the Ephesians", though not the place of address in the prescript.

the designation 'to the Ephesians' should be regarded as a type of commentary by the collectors, which may well have confused the source of an exemplar of the letter with its original addressee. Be that as it may — and no theory of the origin of the reading is without some difficulty — the commentary can serve to confirm the canonical function and need not run in the opposite direction to engender confusion<sup>(44)</sup>.

He states further regarding the prescript that

What distinguishes the Ephesian letter from the great majority of Pauline letters is that the canonical intention to shape the original letter in such a way as to render it accessible to later generations of believers did not take place on the redactional level. The textual expansion in 1:1 only confirms this basic point. Rather, it is reflected in the primary level of the composition, which is to say, that it derives from the author's own intention. The concern to address a new generation of Christians, unknown to Paul, is a small step removed from a growing consciousness of the role of the canon which performed a similar function. The point to be made is that the grounds for the subsequent canonical process extend back into the actual compositional level of the New Testament literature itself<sup>(45)</sup>.

Childs's argument seems to be a clear case where the failure to attend to historical criticism has harmed his means of viewing an issue. Childs has apparently not asked himself what kind of a letter this would have been, one that was written but addressed to no one. Does such a letter exist anywhere else in the New Testament, was such a letter ever present in the early church, or was such a letter ever written in the ancient world? There may have been letters written without specific audiences, but this is the exception rather than the rule and difficult to use as evidence for speculating on something that Childs states as matter of factly as he does<sup>(46)</sup>. Furthermore, Childs is merely speculating when he states that this is the way that the canonical process occurred. He is describing what looks like a historical process when he states that the letter was written without an addressee but that later copyists added, 'to the Ephesians'. He states that this had the effect of narrowing the letter's general appeal. What evidence is there that this took place in

<sup>(44)</sup> CHILDS, *New Testament as Canon*, 325-326.

<sup>(45)</sup> CHILDS, *New Testament as Canon*, 326.

<sup>(46)</sup> See E. BEST, *Ephesians* (New Testament Guides; Sheffield 1993) 12.

this way and that the early church viewed it thus? There does not seem to be any. It appears that this is a hypothesis that has remained hidden until Childs revealed it to us. Rather than his theory providing a means for the text to be more closely engaged with the church, which Childs characteristically tries to do, he has created a greater distance between the text and any other church, ancient or modern. It is clear that Childs has fallen victim to his own criticism of the historical-critical method, by his adoption of such an entirely speculative historical reconstruction of the origin of the letter to the Ephesians. Lemcio has in some ways addressed this issue with his chapter on the city of Ephesus, seeing it not as a necessary limitation upon the teaching of the letter but as a way of tying the letter into a centre of early Christianity<sup>(47)</sup>. But the linkage between this letter and the city of Ephesus is dependent upon the later title and prescript. Perhaps Ephesus became a focal point of Christianity, but that fact does not mean that this is what happened to the letter. This hypothesis too remains highly speculative.

Perhaps another way to approach the issue is in terms of a proposal recently revived by Michael Goulder<sup>(48)</sup>. Goulder speculates that the letter, which he takes to be authentically Pauline, must have been the letter originally addressed to the Laodiceans. There is some merit in his suggestion, especially when seen against the proposals of canonical criticism. He makes a convincing case of dealing with the usual objections to Pauline authorship of Ephesians, in so far as such issues as vocabulary, style and thought can be assessed. But his more important point, so far as our canonical-critical perspective is concerned, is where he notices that the earliest manuscripts do not have the prescript 'in Ephesus', but that Marcion, according to Tertullian (*Adv. Marcionem* 5.17.1), claimed to have discovered that the letter was 'to the Laodiceans'. It is worthwhile suggesting that a very different scenario took place. In this scenario, the letter was

<sup>(47)</sup> WALL–LEMCIO, *New Testament as Canon*, 335-360.

<sup>(48)</sup> GOULDER, "Visionaries of Laodicea", 16, esp. n. 1. For a history of discussion of this proposal, see CHILDS, *New Testament as Canon*, 315; and C. L. MITTON, *The Epistle to the Ephesians. Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose* (Oxford 1951) 34-35, who mentions that the wording of Col 4,16 ("letter from Laodicea") may indicate a circular letter, one having traveled from Laodicea to Colossae and eventually Ephesus.

addressed to the Laodiceans but their abandonment of the faith (see Rev 3,14-22) by the end of the century led to their name being expunged from the letter addressed to them. This would account for both the unattributed early manuscripts and the failure to find Laodicea in any manuscript, although we do know of a Laodicean letter (Col 4,16)<sup>(49)</sup>. Reference to Ephesus may have been added later in the light of Paul's close connections with a church that remained faithful (Rev 2,1-7). This proposal is far less speculative than Childs's in that it deals with what we actually have so far as the evidence of textual tradition is concerned and deals less in hidden intentions. It also presents what we would consider to be a more plausible reconstruction.

### 3. *Literary Relationship between Colossians and Ephesians*

That there is a literary relationship between Colossians and Ephesians is not hard to establish. For example, Abbott has a synoptic chart in which he shows their striking verse by verse similarities<sup>(50)</sup>. At least ten major points of organization can be noted, such as the prescript, thanksgiving and intercessory prayer, message regarding alienation and reconciliation, discussion of Paul's suffering as an apostle and ministry of the mystery, head and body relations, comparison of the old and new persons, the household code, the exhortation to prayer, commendation of Tychicus and benediction. These are not as impressive as they first seem, however, since the similar placement and order of the prescript, thanksgiving and benediction are what one would expect to find in any Pauline letter, and in fact in many if not most Christian letters. In all, 34% of the words of Colossians reappear in Ephesians (and 26.5% of the wording of Ephesians appears in Colossians). Despite all of these similarities of content and wording, however, there are only two extended passages where there is more than five to seven words that are the same. These two passages are Col 4,7-8 and Eph 6,21-22, where 29 words appear

<sup>(49)</sup> The later Latin manuscript is clearly not the original Letter to the Laodiceans.

<sup>(50)</sup> See T.K. ABBOTT, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians* (ICC; Edinburgh 1897) xxiii-xxiv.



together<sup>(51)</sup>. Rather than compare Colossians and Ephesians verse by verse, however, perhaps some insight into the canonical-critical perspective and the relationship of Colossians and Ephesians can be gained by examining a test passage, the so-called reconciliation sections in Col 1,20.22 and Eph 2,16, and their surrounding contexts.

To understand the use of 'reconciliation' language in Col 1,20.22 and Eph 2,16 from a canonical-critical perspective, it is important first of all to understand how the language is used in the undisputed letters of Paul. The two theological passages to consider are 2 Cor 5,18.19.20 and Rom 5,10; 2 Cor 5,18.19.20<sup>(52)</sup> merits extended discussion, because it is apparently the first instance in ancient Greek literature in which an author has used the active voice form of the verb καταλλάσσω to speak of the offended party instigating reconciliation. But this usage is crucial, since it apparently sets the tone for subsequent Pauline usage, whether this is seen as authentically or pseudonymously Pauline. In 2 Cor 5,18, God is stated as the explicit primary agent of reconciliation, with the active voice form of the participial verb. God is said to reconcile 'us' to 'himself'. Thus the object of reconciliation is humanity, probably encompassing those who have been reconciled. Reconciliation is accomplished by secondary means of Christ ('through Christ'), referring to his work on the cross. In 2 Cor 5,19, in a highly disputed construction that we take as periphrastic, God is again explicitly stated as the primary agent of reconciliation. God is the subject of the active voice construction, reconciling the 'world' to 'himself'. The word 'world' here has aroused a wide range of debate, but is again probably limited by context to those who are being addressed, that is, those within the world who are members of the reconciled community. This reconciling action is accomplished 'by Christ' (instrumental use of ἐν). In 2 Cor 5,20, Paul uses the verb καταλλάσσω for the third time. After saying in 5,18 that believers

<sup>(51)</sup> LINCOLN, *Ephesians*, xlviii.

<sup>(52)</sup> We recognize that some have held that the usage in 2 Cor 5,18.19 is traditional rather than created by Paul, but we reject that view. See S. E. PORTER, *Καταλλάσσω in Ancient Greek Literature, with Reference to the Pauline Writings* (Estudios de Filología Neotestamentaria 5; Córdoba 1994) 125-127. For discussion of the issues summarized in this brief paragraph, see 127-144.

are given the ministry of reconciliation, and in 5,19 that God has given believers the word of reconciliation, both uses with the noun, he states in 5,20 that they are to proclaim the message of 'be reconciled to God'. The passive voice verb is used in 5,20 of the ambassadorial message to be proclaimed to the unreconciled world.

In Rom 5,10, Paul uses the verb καταλλάσσω twice<sup>(53)</sup>. In the first instance, as in 2 Cor 5,20, the primary agent of reconciliation is not stated, but the passive voice usage of the verb seems to point to God as the primary agent. Paul tells his Roman readers that 'we were reconciled to God through the death of his son'. The object of reconciliation, as in 2 Cor 5,18, is 'us', and, as in the Corinthian passage, reconciliation in Romans 5 is to 'himself', meaning God. The secondary agency is the death of Christ. In the second instance in Rom 5,10, Paul uses the unmodified aorist passive participle, assuming the same conceptual framework as the earlier part of the verse. The use of the noun in Rom 5,11 simply restates that we receive reconciliation 'through' Christ.

With this understanding in mind, it is appropriate to examine the usage of 'reconciliation' language in Col 1,20.22 and Eph 2,16<sup>(54)</sup>. The term καταλλάσσω has been modified by prefixing the preposition από to the verb, so that the verb in these two letters is ἀποκαταλλάσσω. Although the two forms are clearly cognate, Colossians and Ephesians are the first recorded instances of this form of the verb in all extant ancient Greek writing. If Paul is the author of Colossians, and Colossians is the first letter of the two written, then Paul is the innovator who first apparently prefixed this verb form. If Paul was not the author, then apparently a later Pauline writer felt bold enough to use a related though slightly different form of the word. Although it is perhaps not a sizeable point, it seems to us that Paul himself would have been more likely to use the word for the first time rather than a faithful disciple. It would seem more probable, especially with such a theologically significant term, that a later Pauline writer would want to be more faithful to the great apostle's terminology and not introduce the prefixed form. Of course, this does not mean that Paul could not have

<sup>(53)</sup> See PORTER, *Καταλλάσσω*, 152-162.

<sup>(54)</sup> See PORTER, *Καταλλάσσω*, 163-189.

written Colossians and a later writer used the prefixed term in Ephesians.

In Col 1,20, the primary agent of reconciliation is highly debated. On the basis of the phrasing in Col 1,19 regarding 'all the fullness' (cf. 2,19), it appears that God is the primary agent, said to reconcile (with the active voice verb) 'all things' to 'him'. 'All things' is defined later in the verse as encompassing all things upon the earth and in the heavens, and so is a comprehensive term regarding universal reconciliation. This appears to extend the Pauline usage of 2 Corinthians and Romans. The reference of 'him' (αὐτόν) is also disputed. Some say that it should be read as a contracted reflexive pronoun (αὐτόν), although most scholars would reject this, leaving the reference to Christ rather than to God. This too indicates a shift in formulation, from God to Christ, as the one to whom reconciliation is addressed. The secondary agency of reconciliation is effected 'through him', almost assuredly referring to the work of Christ, an emphasis throughout the passage. In Col 1,22, establishing agency is even more problematic than in 1,20. Although several scholars have argued that it is God, it is perhaps more likely that it is Christ as the primary agent due to the following instrumental phrases. This would mark a significant development in Pauline thought to shift from God to Christ as primary agent, especially within the same context. This instance does not state the object or recipient of reconciliation, although it is said to be by the body of his flesh through death. Although 'you' is said to be presented in 1,22, it is unclear whether 'you' or 'all things' from 1,19 is the object in 1,22. Although in 2 Cor 5,20 the third instance does not specify the object and recipient, here it is less clear than in the Corinthian passage which objects and recipients are being specified, if any.

In Eph 2,16, the author uses ἀποκαταλλάσσω for the last time. In this context Christ is apparently the primary agent of reconciliation (with the active voice verb), since he is the one who has dominated discussion from before 2,14. Christ reconciles 'both' Jew and Gentile 'in one body'. This object of reconciliation is significantly different from previous usage. Whereas there has been an alternation between believers or all things, now the human sphere is divided according to ethnic/religious lines. This is consonant with other language in the passage, such as the 'dividing wall' of 2,14, which points to Jew-Gentile relations. The

recipient of reconciliation is God, and this is accomplished by secondary means of 'through the cross'.

On the basis of this analysis, we will draw several conclusions from a canonical-critical perspective regarding usage, depending upon how we perceive the relationship of Colossians and Ephesians. In terms of authorship, it appears that the Pauline usage of reconciliation language points to authentic Pauline authorship of Colossians and Ephesians. This is not to say that the usage is the same in all of these passages. There is a clear trajectory of development. In speaking of a Pauline trajectory, one must consider several issues. The primary one, it seems to us, is the degree of diversity that can be tolerated within a pseudonymous letter that still would have been considered Pauline enough to be included within the canon. It seems to us that the reconciliation language of Colossians and Ephesians, although it diverges in several significant ways, is sufficiently Pauline in its basic thrust to be consonant with Pauline usage. In some other ways, it is radical and new, but to our way of thinking too radical to have been created by someone other than Paul. As an example, it is worth noting the use of Jew and Gentile language in the context of Temple imagery<sup>(55)</sup>. This is not uncharacteristic of Pauline language, found in other letters such as Romans 9–11<sup>(56)</sup>. But let us consider the alternative of someone other than Paul writing with this language at the end of the first century after the Temple had been destroyed. Although other writers, such as Josephus, refer to the Temple after its destruction<sup>(57)</sup>, the analogy here only really works if the Temple is still seen to constitute some form of barrier.

<sup>(55)</sup> See M. BARTH, *Ephesians* (AB 34, 34A; Garden City 1974), 283–287.

<sup>(56)</sup> For example, see Rom 9,24–33 where there is mercy for both Jew and Gentile; 10,8–13 where Paul exhorts that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile for the same Lord is Lord of all; 10,18–21 where Paul cites the words of Moses to invoke the Jews to jealousy; 11,11–15 where Paul claims that salvation has come to the Gentiles, again, to make the Jews jealous; and lastly, 11,16–29 where Paul uses the analogy of a tree and its branches in order to explain the 'grafting in' of both Jews and Gentiles into the true root.

<sup>(57)</sup> See the discussion in S. E. PORTER, "The Date of the Composition of Hebrews and Use of the Present Tense-Form", *Crossing the Boundaries. Essays in Biblical Interpretation* (FS. M. D. Goulder; [eds. S. E. PORTER–P. JOYCE–D. E. ORTON] BInterpS 8; Leiden 1994) 301.

This points to the letter having been written in the early days of the Christian missionary movement, and being consonant with authentic Pauline writing. Thus our conclusion goes against a standard accommodation found in other forms of canonical criticism. Rather than having to accommodate our position to what is seen to be the inevitability of pseudonymous authorship, or a divide between the canonical author and the historical author, in the light of our exegesis of this terminology in a canonical-critical perspective, it is possible to make a plausible case for Pauline authorship.

For the community of faith, the results are equally significant. We need not be content with stating that some later Pauline interpreter has developed the insight that Jews and Gentiles are now incorporated into the one body, but this idea can be seen to go back to the historical and canonical Paul. Ephesians is thus part and parcel of the authentic Pauline message, as envisioned and proclaimed by the apostle himself not only for the church at Ephesus or Laodicea or somewhere else in Asia Minor, but as part of his general belief in the reconciliation of all humanity to God through Christ. More so than even canonical critics such as Childs (who leaves himself open to differentiating a canon within a canon by distinguishing the historical from the canonical Paul), this canonical-critical perspective on Ephesians (and any other supposed pseudepigraphal book) includes the book fully within the canon; there is no canon within the canon with the authentic witness taking precedence over the later followers<sup>(58)</sup>. Furthermore, the community of faith can appreciate the significance of the Pauline usage of *καταλλάσσω*, that is, God acting to reconcile humanity to himself, a usage first found in Paul, utilized throughout his writings and employed frequently in the writers of the early church<sup>(59)</sup>. The way in which God works with Christ through his death not only provides the foundation for Paul's reconciliation language but is not too far away from what is the essential Pauline message, whether it be reformulated in terms of justification, sanctification, propitiation or the like. For the first believers and for believers today, according to this reading, God is at work restoring humanity to himself through Christ. To

<sup>(58)</sup> WALL–LEMCIO, *New Testament as Canon*, 278.

<sup>(59)</sup> See PORTER, *Καταλλάσσω*, 77-116.

appropriate the significance of this construct is what it means to be a part of the community of faith, and not just the Pauline community of faith. When Paul refers to 'us' or the 'world' or 'all things' or 'both' Jews and Gentiles, these comprehensive and inclusive terms seem to resonate in Paul's writings with reference not only to the first Christian communities to which he has written but to all Christian communities that might identify with such terms. Thus Paul himself seems to imply application of his language to the larger Christian community. Whereas much canonical criticism attempts to contemporize the New Testament but does so on faulty grounds, and much historical criticism neglects the issue altogether, we have tried to provide a logical canonical-critical rationale for contemporizing the message of the New Testament.

#### *4. A Canonical-Critical Perspective and Historical Criticism*

The method exemplified above in discussing authorship, the prescript of Ephesians and Paul's reconciliation language has employed a canonical-critical perspective, one that appreciates the formation and shape of the New Testament canon but that also utilizes the work of historical criticism. Not only have we employed the standard tools of exegesis, such as lexicography and grammatical analysis, but we have treated the letters in the light of the most likely chronological reconstruction of their dates (not their canonical order). We have read the letters against what we consider to be the most likely historical background, including Paul's writing to a church that he founded in Corinth and a church that he did not found in Rome, as well as Colossians and Ephesians in terms of later Pauline writings. We have utilized epistolary structure gained from study of the letter form in the Greco-Roman world in plotting the developing argument of the passage, and we have considered *καταλλάσσω* and its cognate, *ἀποκαταλλάσσω*, against the backdrop of ancient Greek usage. This points to the benefits of historical criticism for a canonical-critical perspective.

The question that will be asked, of course, is what is the necessity of a canonical-critical perspective if historical criticism can produce so much? Why not simply refine historical criticism, rather than having to consider canonical issues as

well?<sup>(60)</sup> It is fine to raise such an objection, but what must also be examined is whether canonical considerations have been raised as adjunctive issues within the larger framework of historical criticism. Our answer is that they have not. The canonical-critical perspective that we have utilized above brings into consideration several factors that are either overlooked or rarely if ever considered in either historical or canonical criticism. Our canonical-critical perspective has forced us to consider the broader, holistic context. To illustrate the point, although much previous work on these Pauline passages has argued over whether Col 1,15-20 and possibly later verses are part of a pre-Pauline formulation, we have examined the reconciliation language in terms of the argument of Colossians as compared to that of 2 Corinthians 5 and Romans 5. The contemporary implications of the text have readily emerged from our exegesis — suggested by the very wording of the passage — rather than being forced readings or neglected altogether, as is typical of much historical criticism. Since canonical criticism and historical criticism have been integrated into our canonical-critical perspective, we hope that we have been able to avoid falling into the kinds of speculation that can result from relying upon a single method. The result has perhaps been a degree of stability and balance not found in each of the methods alone. Although we too have not avoided a certain amount of historical reconstruction, we have attempted to do so on the basis of both historical and canonical factors, something usually not employed by historical critics and often used in an unaware and naïve way by canonical critics. As a result, historical and theological concerns, suggested by the text, have each had their place in our analysis, rather than our suppressing one or the other.

In several ways, the canonical-critical perspective has not only integrated canonical and historical criticism but has moved beyond them. Childs and others have never considered the relation of Colossians and Ephesians from a canonical perspective. In that sense, it is hoped that we have pushed canonical criticism forward by this approach. In terms of historical criticism, most commentaries, as well as introductions to Paul and his writings, rarely

<sup>(60)</sup> See C.L. BLOMBERG, “Critical Issues in New Testament Studies for Evangelicals Today”, *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture* (eds. P.E. SATTERTHWAITE–D.F. WRIGHT) (Grand Rapids 1994) 61.

ask the kinds of questions treated above from a canonical perspective. Their discussions, where such is to be found, are often relegated either to the virtually entirely historical or to the virtually entirely theological levels. They are often discussed from the perspective of having pre-decided the issue of authorship, rather than using the canonical perspective to inform their thinking. Furthermore, although historical criticism in its best incarnation focuses upon the text, a canonical-critical perspective has *compelled* historical criticism to stay focused upon the text. In this case, it has forced us to stay focused upon the several texts, seeing them in relation to each other and in terms of their place within the larger Pauline context. Whereas historical criticism (and even much canonical criticism) often begins at this point, justifying its conclusions regarding authorship on the basis of such investigation, the canonical-critical perspective has utilized the best tools of historical criticism to focus attention upon the interpretative task at hand, without straying into such matters as further investigation of historical background and reconstruction. Any reconstructions offered have been limited to features suggested by keeping the integrity of the text at the forefront of exegesis.

#### IV. Conclusion

In the light of the fact that there has been no sustained analysis of Colossians and Ephesians by canonical critics, this paper has attempted to define and apply a workable model of what we have called a canonical-critical perspective to these two Pauline letters. The goal has not been to provide definitive canonical-critical readings but to suggest possible solutions to critical issues and to subject these to necessary scrutiny. Our close reading of the text from a canonical-critical perspective is something that canonical criticism has not done in the past, but something that we believe it must do in order to establish and maintain its place in the pantheon of critical methodologies. As we have pointed out above, theory is interesting for its own sake, but the test of any theory is when it is successfully applied to interpretation. What is less important to us at this stage is whether our particular interpretations have been entirely convincing. What we have tried to



show is that there is potential for a canonical-critical perspective as an exegetical model, and that these might be some of the ways that it could approach issues regarding the relationship of Colossians and Ephesians.

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### SUMMARY

Indicating that Colossians and Ephesians need a sustained study according to canonical-critical method, Porter-Clarke propose to define and apply to these two letters a workable model of what they have called a canonical-critical perspective. After study of canonical criticism today and of certain problems this criticism faces, Porter-Clarke explain their choice of the word “perspective” and describe on going difficulties the method must meet. The canonical-critical perspective then studies three problems: the authorship of the letters, the prescript of Ephesians and the literary relationship between the two letters. There follows a relating of canonical to historical criticism.

# ANIMADVERSIÖ

## Manasse und der Untergang Judas: "Golaorientierte" Theologie in den Königsbüchern?

### I.

Die Geschichtsdarstellung der Königsbücher läßt keinen Zweifel daran, daß Manasse der schlechteste König<sup>(1)</sup> auf dem Davidsthron war, so schlecht, daß nicht einmal mehr das Reformwerk des frommen Josia das Gericht über Juda abzuwenden vermochte, das mit der Zerstörung Jerusalems durch die Babylonier, dem Verlust von Tempel, Königtum und Land über Juda hereinbrach. Der Lasterkatalog in 2Kön 21,10-17 gibt über die Schandtaten Manasses Auskunft und die Notizen 2Kön 23,26-27; 24,3-4 halten nach dem Bericht über die Regentschaft Josias fest, daß genau diese es waren, die den göttlichen Zorn hervorriefen und den Untergang Judas unwiderruflich machten. Wenn Manasse nicht gewesen wäre, hätte es für Juda noch eine Chance gegeben, doch Manasses Abgöttereien und Grausamkeiten ließen bereits vor Josia den Beschluß YHWHs feststehen, daß Jerusalem und Juda "ausgewischt" (2Kön 21,13) werden sollen. Der schlechte Ruf Manasses reicht sogar über die Königsbücher hinaus: Auch Jer 15,4<sup>(2)</sup> weiß, daß der Grund für den Untergang Judas bei Manasse liegt<sup>(3)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> Vgl. ausführlich S. LASINE, "Manasseh as Villain and Scapegoat", *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (ed. J. C. EXUM—D. J. A. CLINES) (JSOTSS 143; Sheffield 1993) 162-183.

<sup>(2)</sup> Zur Diskussion vgl. die Lit. bei K. A. D. SMELIK, "The portrayal of king Manasseh. A literary analysis of II Kings xxi and II Chronicles xxiii", *Converting the Past. Studies in Ancient Israelite and Moabite Historiography* (K. A. D. SMELIK) (OTS 28; Leiden 1992) 129-189: 168-169, Anm. 141-142.

<sup>(3)</sup> Zu den positiven Retuschen samt der Bekehrung, die die chronistische Darstellung (2Chr 33,1-20, dort Vv.12-13) wahrscheinlich wegen der langen Regierungszeit Manasses (55 Jahre) in das ihr vorgegebene negative Manassebild eingetragen hat, vgl. H. SPIECKERMANN, "Manasse", *TRE* 22 (Berlin—New York 1992) 16-19: 17; W. SCHNIEDEWIND, "The source citations of Manasseh: King Manasseh in history and homily", *VT* 41 (1991) 450-461; SMELIK, "Manasseh", 187-188; S. JAPHET, *I & II Chronicles. A Commentary* (OTL; London 1993) 1001-1005 (JAPHET schließt nicht aus, daß 2Chr 33,11 — die Deportation Manasses nach Babel — historische Erinnerung bewahrt hat). In der Darstellung 2Kön 21,1-18 fällt das Fehlen jeglicher historischer Differenzierung der berichteten Ereignisse auf, das läßt darauf schließen, "that the narrator's concern was to depict the reign of Manasseh as wicked in its entirety" (P. S. F. VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh Through the Eyes of the Deuteronomists. The Manasseh Account and the Final Chapters of the Deuteronomistic History* [OTS 38; Leiden u.a. 1996] 85). In der zwischentestamentlichen Literatur ist sowohl das Bild Manasses aus Kön als auch dasjenige aus Chr wirksam

Über die literarhistorische Einordnung der Präsentation Manasses in den Königsbüchern, aber auch im Jeremiabuch, ist sich die Forschung weitgehend einig: Sie ist "deuteronomistischer" <sup>(4)</sup> Herkunft <sup>(5)</sup>. Entsprechend der heute üblich gewordenen weiteren Differenzierung <sup>(6)</sup> in den deuteronomistischen Stücken in Dtn–2Kön rechnet man den überwiegenden Textanteil der Manassepassagen 2Kön 21,1-18; 23,26-27; 24,3-4, namentlich diejenigen, die die Schuld Manasses hyperbolisieren, nicht zur Grundschrift des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks, sondern späteren, aber ebenfalls deuteronomistischen Überarbeitung(en) zu <sup>(7)</sup>. Entweder man differenziert nach dem Göttinger Dreischichtenmodell, das neben der Grundschrift "DtrH" einen "prophetischen" Strang "DtrP" und einen "nomistischen" Strang "DtrN" kennt <sup>(8)</sup>, nach dem Cross'schen Modell, das neben dem josiazeitlichen Grundentwurf des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks <sup>(9)</sup> Dtr<sup>1</sup> eine exilische Erweiterung Dtr<sup>2</sup> unterscheidet, oder nach einem Mischmodell <sup>(10)</sup>. Eine wichtige Rolle für die jeweiligen Zuweisungen an sekundär-deuteronomistische Straten spielt vor allem für

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geworden: Im "Martyrium Jesajas" ist Manasse verantwortlich für den grausamen Tod Jesajas, während ihn das "Gebet Manasses" als reuigen Sünder zeichnet (vgl. SMELIK, "Manasseh", 131 und die Hinweise dort. Anm. 4-6).

<sup>(4)</sup> Zu den Problemen um den Begriff vgl. K. SCHMID, *Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches. Untersuchungen zur Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Jer 30-33 im Kontext des Buches* (WMANT 72; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1996) 31-33, 346-349.

<sup>(5)</sup> Vgl. z.B. H.-D. HOFFMANN, *Reform und Reformen. Untersuchungen zu einem Grundthema der deuteronomistischen Geschichtsschreibung* (ATANT 66; Zürich 1980) 157; R. RENDTORFF, *Das Alte Testament. Eine Einführung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1983) 191; G. HENTSCHEL, *1. Könige. 2. Könige* (NEB; Würzburg 1985) 253; M. COGAN–H. TADMOR, *II Kings* (AB 11; New York 1988) 270, 307; SPIECKERMANN, "Manasse", 17.

<sup>(6)</sup> S. die Forschungsberichte von H. WEIPPERT, "Das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk. Sein Ziel und Ende in der neueren Forschung", *TRu* 50 (1985) 213-249; H.D. PREUSS, "Zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk", *TRu* 58 (1993) 229-264, 341-395; G.N. KNOPPERS, *Two Nations under God. The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies*. Vol. 1: *The Reign of Solomon and the Rise of Jeroboam* (HSM 52; Atlanta 1993) 17-56; VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 4-52.

<sup>(7)</sup> Vgl. die Forschungssynopse zu 2Kön 21,1-18 bei SMELIK, "Manasseh", 165; für Jer 15,4 ebd. 168 Anm. 141-142.

<sup>(8)</sup> R. SMEND, *Die Entstehung des Alten Testament* (ThW 1; Stuttgart 1991) 123f.; vgl. im einzelnen W. DIETRICH, *Prophezie und Geschichte* (FRLANT 108; Göttingen 1972); H. SPIECKERMANN, *Juda unter Assur in der Sargonidenzeit* (FRLANT 129; Göttingen 1982); E. WÜRTHWEIN, *Die Bücher der Könige. 1 Kön 17-2 Kön 25* (ATD 11/2; Göttingen 1984); E. BEN ZVI, "The Account of the Reign of Manasseh in II Reg 21,1-18 and the Redactional History of the Book of Kings", *ZAW* 103 (1991) 355-374.

<sup>(9)</sup> F.M. CROSS, "The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History", *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic. Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (F.M. CROSS) (Cambridge MA 1973) 274-289; 285-286; R.D. NELSON, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSS 18; Sheffield 1981) 65-69; COGAN–TADMOR, *II Kings*, 307; vgl. für 2Kön 21,8-15(16) auch S.L. MCKENZIE, *The Trouble with Kings. The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (VTS 42; Leiden u.a. 1991) 144, der ansonsten die Nothsche Einheitslösung vertritt.

<sup>(10)</sup> M.A. O'BRIEN, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis. A Reassessment* (OBO 92; Göttingen 1989); A. MOENIKES, "Zur Redaktionsgeschichte des sogenannten Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks", *ZAW* 104 (1992) 333-348: 338.

diejenigen Forscher, die im Anschluß an Cross mit einer vorexilischen Ausgabe eines "deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks" rechnen, die Beobachtung, daß die prägnantesten und schärfsten Aussagen der Manassepassagen den Untergang Judas und Jerusalems bereits voraussetzen — so ganz deutlich 2 Kön 23,26-27; 24,3-4, aber auch 21,10-15. Außerdem fällt auf, daß der letztgenannte Text, ein scharfes Untergangsorakel für Jerusalem, im optimistisch gefärbten Bericht über Josias Regentschaft 2 Kön 22-23 kaum eine organische Fortführung hat<sup>(11)</sup>.

## II.

Die verbreitete Ansicht, daß maßgebliche Textanteile aus 2 Kön 21,1-18 sowie die Rückverweise auf Manasse in 2 Kön 23,26-27; 24,3-4 auf Überarbeitung beruhen, ist plausibel: Die Manassetexte zeigen ein Aussageprofil, das in den Königsbüchern in mehrfacher Hinsicht singulär ist. Mehr noch: Sie heben sich vor allem sachlich in einem derartigen Maß von ihrem Kontext ab, daß man m.E. fragen muß, ob sie noch sinnvoll als "deuteronomistisch" oder "spätdeuteronomistisch" angesprochen werden können, d.h. — um innerhalb der komplizierten "Deuteronomismus"-Debatte eine einigermaßen pragmatische Definition vorzuschlagen<sup>(12)</sup> — ob sie ein konzeptionell identifizierbares Gepräge aufweisen, das sich mit anderen Deutepassagen in den Geschichtsbüchern, v.a. in Jos-2 Kön verbinden läßt. Folgende Auffälligkeiten sind zu nennen:

1. Daß ein einzelnes Individuum, Manasse, für die nationale Katastrophe verantwortlich sein soll (2 Kön 23,26-27; 24,3-4), fügt sich nur schlecht zum Gedanken einer *anhaltenden Schuldgeschichte* Israels, die mit der Zerstörung seiner Eigenstaatlichkeit endet, wie ihn eine Reihe prominenter "deuteronomistischer" Deutetexte in (Ex-)Jos-2 Kön sowie weitere, spätere Texte und Schriften in deren sachlichem Anschluß exponieren<sup>(13)</sup>. Die "Sünden Manasses" (2 Kön 21,17; 24,3) entlasten demgegenüber geradezu das Volk<sup>(14)</sup>, aber auch die übrigen Könige Judas (vgl. dagegen 2 Kön 23,32.37; 24,9.19!), deren Mißverhalten durch die Regentschaft Josias nach der Auskunft von 2 Kön 24,3-4, noch hätte aufgewogen werden können: "Nur wegen des Beschlusses YHWHs (אֲךָ עַל פִּי יְהוָה)<sup>(15)</sup> geschah es mit Juda, daß er [es] von seinem Angesicht entfernte, wegen der Sünden Manasses, nach allem, was er getan hatte" (2 Kön 24,3). Wenn Manasse als einzelner König den Untergang Jerusalems verschuldet hat, dann wird die

<sup>(11)</sup> VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 50.

<sup>(12)</sup> Vgl. zum Problem N. LOHFINK, "Deuteronomistisch", NBL I, 413-414.

<sup>(13)</sup> Vgl. dazu O. H. STECK, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum* (WMANT 23; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1967) 124-128, 184-189.

<sup>(14)</sup> Vgl. LASINE, "Manasseh", 174-175.

<sup>(15)</sup> LXX bietet πλην ἐπὶ τὸν θυμὸν κυρίου und gleicht mit 2 Kön 24,20 und 2 Chr 36,5 aus. Zur Übersetzung von אֲךָ עַל פִּי יְהוָה vgl. Num 3,16; 9,20 sowie VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 151 mit Anm. 178.

Unheilsgeschichte Judas in der Königszeit als ganze in ihrer ätiologischen Funktion für deren Ende nivelliert. Die Zuschreibung der Schuld am Untergang Judas an Manasse ist so gesehen keineswegs "deuteronomistisch" gedacht<sup>(16)</sup>.

2. Weiter fällt auf, daß die Schuld Manasses nicht bei der Darstellung der Ereignisse von 587 v.Chr. in 2 Kön 25, sondern bei derjenigen der ersten Deportation von 597 v.Chr. in 2 Kön 24,3-4 aufgegriffen wird. Im Abschnitt seiner eigenen Regentschaft 2 Kön 21 waren Manasses Untaten dergestalt präsentiert worden, daß sie der Grund für die Zerstörung Jerusalems seien: "...ich will ausspannen über Jerusalem die Meßschnur Samarias und die Setzwaage des Hauses Ahabs, ich will Jerusalem auswischen wie man eine Schüssel auswischt — auswischen und auf den Kopf stellen" (2 Kön 21,13)<sup>(17)</sup>. Zu erwarten wäre aus "deuteronomistischer" Perspektive, daß nicht, wie es im vorliegenden Text der Fall ist, in 2 Kön 24,3-4, sondern anläßlich des Berichts über die endgültige Zerstörung Jerusalems in 2 Kön 25 der Blick auf Manasse zurückgelenkt wird. Stattdessen ist Manasse für die Ereignisse von 597 v.Chr. verantwortlich, die in 2 Kön 24 — entgegen der Darstellung von 2 Kön 25 — ihrerseits bereits nach Ausweis von Vv. 13-14 Tempelplünderung und nahezu eine Totaldeportation umfaßten. Auf diese auffällige Konkurrenz von 2 Kön 24 zu 2 Kön 25 wird noch zurückzukommen sein.

3. Die Vorwürfe, die in 2 Kön 21 gegen Manasse vorgebracht werden, sind in mehrerer Hinsicht singulär innerhalb der Königsbücher. 2 Kön 21,3 spricht davon, daß Manasse die Höhenheiligtümer (במות) wieder aufgebaut (בנה+שׁב) habe, die Hiskia zerstört habe (אבד pi.). Daß ein König zuvor zerstörte "Höhen" wieder aufbaut, wird nur von Manasse berichtet<sup>(18)</sup>. Erstaunen muß die Wortwahl אבד pi., mit der das Zerstören der "Höhen" durch Hiskia bezeichnet wird, denn im entsprechenden Bericht 2 Kön 18,4 ist von הִסִּיר die Rede. Von במות wird hingegen in der Gerichtsankündigung Ez 6,3 gesprochen<sup>(19)</sup> — daß der Sprachgebrauch von 2 Kön 21,3 näher bei Ez als bei der Referenzstelle 2 Kön 18,4<sup>(20)</sup> im selben Buch steht, ist auffällig.

<sup>(16)</sup> M. NOTH, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Darmstadt [1943] 1957) 85-86, kommt in seiner Besprechung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks auf dieses inhaltliche Profil der Manassepassagen in 2 Kön 21.24 nicht zu sprechen — es steht seiner These, daß es sich beim deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk um die planvolle und geschlossene "Arbeit eines Mannes" (110, Hervorhebung K.S.) handelt, aber immerhin diametral gegenüber.

<sup>(17)</sup> Die beiden letzten Verben sind als Infinitive zu lesen, vgl. BHS; WÜRTHEIN, *Bücher der Könige*, 439.

<sup>(18)</sup> Vgl. VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 93. Das Errichten von "Höhen" wird außer von Manasse von Salomo (1 Kön 11,7; 2 Kön 23,13) und Jerobeam (2 Kön 23,15) berichtet. Auch mit der Herstellung einer Aschera (vgl. 1 Kön 16,33) macht Manasse eine Reformmassnahme Hiskias wieder rückgängig (vgl. 2 Kön 18,4).

<sup>(19)</sup> Vgl. ferner Num 33,52; Dtn 12,2; 2 Kön 19,18 = Jes 37,19.

<sup>(20)</sup> VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 94, meint, die Wahl von אבד pi. statt הִסִּיר bedinge sich dadurch, daß der Autor von 2 Kön 21,3 wegen der analogen Verwendung in Num 33,52; Dtn 12,2; 2 Kön 19,18 = Jes 37,19 betonen wollte, daß es sich bei den zerstörten "Höhen" nicht um "jahwistische", sondern um "heidnische" Kultstätten handelte. Dies ergibt sich jedoch nicht aus der Semantik von אבד pi.

Auch der Vorwurf, Manasse habe "das ganze 'Himmelsheer' (צבא השמים) angebetet (השתחוה)" und ihm "gedient", ist in den Königsbüchern einzigartig<sup>(21)</sup>: Von keinem König wird dies sonst erzählt, allein in 2 Kön 17,16 heißt es wörtlich gleich, daß das ganze Nordreich "das ganze 'Himmelsheer' angebetet" habe.

Singulär ist weiterhin, daß nur Manasse beschuldigt wird, daß er Zeichendeuterei (ענין), Wahrsagerei (נחש) und Nekromantie getrieben (עשה אוב וידעונים) habe (2 Kön 21,6). Daß ein König YHWH "reizt" (כעס) wird zwar vielfach von Nordreichskönigen gesagt hi.) (1 Kön 14,9; 15,30; Jerobeam; 1 Kön 16,7; Baasa; 1 Kön 16,26; Omri; 1 Kön 16,33; Ahab; 1 Kön 22,54; Ahazia; generell von den Königen Israels: 2 Kön 23,19, vom Volk Israel: 1 Kön 16,2.13; 2 Kön 17,11.17), Manasse ist aber der einzige König Judas, der YHWH "gereizt" hat. Ähnlich steht es mit der Aussage, Manasse habe "Israel zur Sünde verführt" (2 Kön 21,11.16) — dies wird sonst nur von Nordreichskönigen, und zwar weitaus am häufigsten von Jerobeam I. (1 Kön 14,16; 15,26.30.34; 16,2.19.26; 22,53; 2 Kön 3,3; 10,29.31; 13,2.11; 14,24; 15,9.18.24.28; 17,21; 23,15; Jerobeam; 1 Kön 16,13; Baasa und Ela; 1 Kön 21,22; Ahab) festgestellt.

Die Nennung zahlreicher Vergehen von Nordreichskönigen, vor allem Jerobeams I. und explizit Ahabs<sup>(23)</sup> (2 Kön 21,3.13), und der Bevölkerung des Nordreichs im Lasterkatalog Manasses in 2 Kön 21, die sonst bei jüdischen Königen nicht vorkommen, stützt noch einmal im Detail, was oben unter (1.) gesagt wurde: Die Schuld am Untergang Judas, der ganz in Korrespondenz zu demjenigen Israels gesehen ist, wird vollständig auf die Person Manasses hin konzentriert, der eben deshalb ausdrücklich mit Ahab verglichen wird, weil auch von ihm — jedenfalls was das Nordreich betrifft — unvergleichliche Schlechtigkeit (1 Kön 16,30.33) festgestellt wird.

4. Dadurch, daß Manasse ein Bild der Aschera im Tempel — und zwar ist wohl an das Allerheiligste gedacht<sup>(24)</sup> — aufstellt, hat er ihn nach der Auffassung von 2 Kön 21,7 gänzlich entweiht: Das Aufstellen (שי) der Aschera im Tempel durch Manasse steht in unmittelbarem Kontrast zum "Aufstellen" (שי) des Namens YHWHs am selben Ort<sup>(25)</sup>. 2 Kön 23,26-27 macht dann die Verbindung zwischen den "Provokationen" (הכעסים) Manasses und dem Ende des Tempels ausdrücklich. Ist aber der Tempel bereits durch Manasse entweiht worden, so bedeutet dies, daß "this would render Josiah's temple reform (2 Kgs. 23:1-15 passim) an absurd undertaking"<sup>(26)</sup>. Kurz: Das Aufstellen der Aschera durch Manasse machte die Kultreform Hiskias rückgängig und diejenige Josias sinnlos. Diese Ak-

<sup>(21)</sup> Vgl. VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 96.

<sup>(22)</sup> Zu כעס als Verstoß gegen das erste und zweite Gebot s. F. STOLZ, "כעס", *THAT* 1, 838-842; 840-841.

<sup>(23)</sup> Vgl. im einzelnen W. M. SCHNIEDEWIND, "History and Interpretation: The Religion of Ahab and Manasseh in the Book of Kings", *CBQ* 55 (1993) 649-661; VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 146-147.

<sup>(24)</sup> Vgl. die Diskussion bei VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 110-111 mit Anm. 76.

<sup>(25)</sup> Vgl. VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 105.

<sup>(26)</sup> VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 110.

zentuierung von 2 Kön 22–23, die sich von 2 Kön 21 her ergibt, liegt aber keineswegs auf der Linie “deuteronomistischen” Denkens: Hier gibt es keine absolute qualitative Differenzierung, die es plausibel machen würde, daß das Treiben Manasses als ultimativer und allein das Unheil auslösender Frevel (2 Kön 23,26–27; 24,3–4) von den Vergehen Israels unterschieden wäre, vielmehr ist die Geschichte Israels als die einer kontinuierlich anwachsenden Schuld gesehen, die auch die Reform Josias nicht mehr aufzuwiegen vermochte.

5. Die bisherigen Vorwürfe gegen Manasse in 2 Kön 21,1–9 erhalten ein besonderes Gewicht dadurch, daß sie in 2 Kön 21,10–15 unmittelbar durch ein Prophetenwort fortgeführt werden, das auf das kommende, totale Gericht vorausblickt. Dieses Prophetenwort ist das einzige in den Königsbüchern, das nicht von einem einzelnen Propheten, sondern von den “Knechten [YHWHs], den Propheten”<sup>(27)</sup> — im Plural — gesprochen worden sein will (2 Kön 21,10). Die Verwendung von עבדי ה' in 2 Kön 21,10 ist in doppelter Hinsicht bemerkenswert<sup>(28)</sup>: Zum einen ergibt sich so ein weiterer Zusammenhang mit dem Reflexionstext auf den Untergang des Nordreichs 2 Kön 17, denn die pluralische Fassung des Ausdrucks עבדי ה' begegnet neben 2 Kön 21,10 und dem Rückverweis auf Manasse in 2 Kön 24,2 nur noch dreimal in Könige: zweimal in 2 Kön 17 (Vv. 13.23) und 2 Kön 9,7 — hier ist, für 2 Kön 21 wiederum passend, von Ahab die Rede. Zum anderen — und das ist hier der wichtigere Punkt — interpretiert 2 Kön 21,10–15 die gesamte Gerichtsbotschaft der Propheten, und dabei ist an die Bücher der Schriftpropheten zu denken, als Vorwurf gegen Manasse: Die Propheten verkünden in ihren Büchern nichts anderes als das durch die Schuld Manasses begründete kommende Unheil.

6. In 2 Kön 21,16 wird festgestellt, daß Manasse “sehr viel unschuldiges Blut (דם נקי) vergoß”<sup>(29)</sup>, so daß er Jerusalem damit “anfüllte” (מלא) — die Begründungspassage 2 Kön 24,4 lenkt noch einmal auf dieses “Blutvergießen” durch Manasse zurück. Auch dieser Vorwurf wird in den Königsbüchern nur gegen Manasse erhoben; die nächste — und sprachlich exklusive<sup>(30)</sup> — Parallele findet sich in Jer 19,4<sup>(31)</sup>: Hier werden die “Könige Judas und die Bewohner Jerusalems” (19,3) beschuldigt, sie hätten “diesen Ort” mit dem “Blut Unschuldiger” (דם נקים) “angefüllt” (מלא). Jer 19 trifft sich auch sonst sachlich mit 2 Kön 21: Jer 19,3 spricht wie 2 Kön 21,12<sup>(32)</sup> vom “Gellen der Ohren” (צליל אוזניים) als Folge der Nachricht des kommenden Unheils; in Jer 19,4 wird wie in 2 Kön 21,3 die Entweihung des Allerheiligsten durch Fremdgötterkult gebrandmarkt und Jer 19,5–15 behandelt wie 2 Kön 21,6 die Tophet-Thematik. Hat 2 Kön

<sup>(27)</sup> Vgl. die Diskussion bei A. G. AULD, “Prophets Through the Looking Glass: Between Writings and Moses”, *JSOT* 27 (1983) 3–23: 6–9.

<sup>(28)</sup> Vgl. auch SCHNIEDEWIND, “History and Interpretation”, 656–657; VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 122–123.

<sup>(29)</sup> Zu den späteren Auslegungen auf das Martyrium Jesajas vgl. die Hinweise bei VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 141 mit Anm. 156.

<sup>(30)</sup> Vgl. nur 2 Kön 21,16; Jer 19,4.

<sup>(31)</sup> VAN KEULEN, *Manasseh*, 140 mit Anm. 154.

<sup>(32)</sup> Sonst nur noch 1 Sam 3,11.

21,16 Jer 19,4 im Blick, so zeigt sich wiederum Vergleichbares wie bei den bereits besprochenen Punkten: Eine klassische "deuteronomistische" <sup>(33)</sup> Aussage, die die Schuld des Volkes thematisiert, wird auf Manasse, nach 2Kön 21 den einzigen Schuldträger, uminterpretiert: Die Schuld des "Blutvergießens" trifft nicht die "Könige Judas und die Bewohner Jerusalems" (Jer 19,3-4), sondern allein Manasse.

### III.

So stellt sich zu 2Kön 21 sowie den Manasseerwähnungen in 2Kön 23,26-27; 24,3-4 ein Problem, das der neueren Deuteronomismus-Forschung immer deutlicher vor Augen zu treten beginnt: Neben der mittlerweile überwiegend anerkannten inneren Differenzierungsbedürftigkeit "deuteronomistischer" Texte mehren sich die Hinweise, daß es "deuteronomistisch" formulierte Texte gibt, die aber den herkömmlichen Denkrahmen der klassischen Deuteronomismen sachlich sprengen, und deshalb unter inhaltlichem Gesichtspunkt gesehen nicht mehr als "deuteronomistisch" oder "spätdeuteronomistisch" angesprochen werden können. Besonders deutlich ist dies im Jeremiabuch bei Texten wie Jer 24 oder Jer 31,31-34 <sup>(34)</sup>, aber auch in den Königsbüchern läßt sich Entsprechendes etwa für ein bestimmtes Stratum in 1Kön 8 beobachten, wo — wie in Jer 31,34 — vom "Sündenvergeben" die Rede ist, was kaum mehr sinnvoll als Bestandteil "deuteronomistischer" Theologie gelten kann <sup>(35)</sup>.

Ein weiterer Fall scheint nun in 2Kön 21,24 vorzuliegen: Aus den genannten Beobachtungen kann eine literarische Klassifizierung der Schuld Manasses am Untergang Judas als "deuteronomistisch" — im umfassenden Sinn, also auch unter Einschluß von Kategorien wie "DtrP", DtrN" oder "Dtr<sup>2</sup>" — kaum in Frage kommen.

Diese konzeptionellen Beobachtungen haben literarkritische Relevanz. Die besprochenen Aussagen in 2Kön 21,3.5-16 verändern das sachliche Gepräge des ihnen zugrundeliegenden Königsbuchs und dürften auf eine jedenfalls sachlich, wahrscheinlich aber auch literarisch einheitliche Redaktionstätigkeit zurückzuführen sein, die auch für die sachlichen Aufnahmen der Schuld Manasses in 2Kön 23,26-27; 24,3-4, die mit der überarbeiteten Gestalt von 2Kön 21 völlig gleichsinnig sind, verantwortlich ist. Neben 2Kön 21,1-2.4.17-18 kann man mit Nelson Vv. 6a.7a dem der Überarbeitung zugrundeliegenden Grundtext — nach Nelson dem vorexilischen "Dtr<sup>1</sup>" — zurechnen <sup>(36)</sup>, die Überarbeitung umfaßt demnach in 2Kön 21

<sup>(33)</sup> Vgl. zu Jer 19,2b-9.11b-13 W. THIEL, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1-25* (WMANT 41; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973) 219-229: bes. 228.

<sup>(34)</sup> Vgl. SCHMID, *Buchgestalten*, 253-269, 295-304.

<sup>(35)</sup> So zutreffend E. TALSTRA, *Solomon's Prayer. Synchrony and Diachrony in the Composition of 1 Kings 8,14-61* (CBET 3; Kampen 1993) 255; anders M. NOTH, *Könige. 1. Teilband* (BKAT 9,1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1968) 185-190; S. HERRMANN, *Die prophetischen Heilserwartungen im Alten Testament. Ursprung und Gestaltwandel* (BWANT 85; Stuttgart 1965) 183; J. HAUSMANN, "סלח", *TWAT V*, 859-867: 866.

<sup>(36)</sup> NELSON, *Double Redaction*, 65-69. Nelsons Überarbeitung ("Dtr<sup>2</sup>") umfaßt in 2Kön 21 die Vv. 3ba-15 außer Vv. 4a.6a.7a. Eine knappe Zusammenfas-



die Vv. 3.5.6b.8-16. Die literarkritische Isolierung der betreffenden Aussagen bereitet aufgrund der summierenden Tendenz von 2 Kön 21 keine Schwierigkeiten, umso wichtiger ist das Einbringen konzeptioneller Kriterien, wie dies mit dem Punkt der Schuldkonzentration auf Manasse erfolgt ist, für diachrone Entscheidungen.

#### IV.

Wenn die Schuld Manasses am Untergang Judas nicht "deuteronomistisch" ist, was dann? Für die Erhebung des sachlichen Profils dieser Aussage ist von der unter II.2. genannten Beobachtung auszugehen, daß die Verfehlungen und Grausamkeiten Manasses in erster Linie die Ereignisse von 597 v.Chr., wie sie 2 Kön 24 beschreiben, begründen. Offenbar stellt für den Manassetext 2 Kön 24,3-4, wie seine Position zu Beginn von 2 Kön 24 indiziert, das Datum 597 v.Chr. den Zeitpunkt des endgültigen Untergangs Jerusalems dar, wie es nachfolgend 2 Kön 24,13-14 auch ausdrücklich statuiert. 2 Kön 24,13 verlegt im Widerspruch zur Darstellung in 2 Kön 25,13-17 die Tempelplünderung von 587 v.Chr. zurück auf 597 v.Chr. und 24,14b konstatiert bereits für dasselbe Jahr: "Niemand blieb übrig außer der armen Landbevölkerung". Es gibt also eine Sichtweise in 2 Kön 24, die vor allem in Vv. 13-14 zu fassen ist, die im Gegensatz zu dem in 2 Kön 25 Berichteten bereits die Ereignisse um die Deportation der Jojachin-Gola als das entscheidende Untergangsdatum fixieren will. Daß zu dieser Sichtweise die Begründung 2 Kön 24,3-4, die auf die Schuld Manasses reflektiert, hinzuzurechnen ist, zeigt sich neben der literarischen Stellung auch im Sprachgebrauch dieser Verse: Der Ausdruck *הסיר מעל פניו* "vom [von seinem] Angesicht entfernen" 24,3 lenkt via 23,27 deutlich auf 2 Kön 17,18.23 zurück. Aus der Perspektive von 24,3 bedeuten demnach die Ereignisse von 597 v.Chr. — nicht 587 v.Chr.! — dasselbe für Juda wie diejenigen von 722 v.Chr. für Israel, nämlich den Untergang<sup>(37)</sup>. Von hierher gewinnt auch die Redeweise von den "Sünden Manasses" 24,3 ein scharfes Profil. Sie rufen die "Sünde Jerobeams" in Erinnerung, die gemäß der Reflexion 2 Kön 17,21-22 auf die Katastrophe des Nordreichs den Grund dafür darstellte: Ebenso wie Israel wegen der "Sünde Jerobeams" untergegangen ist, so geht Juda aus der Sicht von 24,3 wegen der "Sünden Manasses" unter<sup>(38)</sup> — so wie Jerobeam Israel zur "Sünde verführt hatte" (*החטיא* 2 Kön 17,22 *passim* in 1-2 Kön), so tat es Manasse mit Juda (*החטיא* 2 Kön

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sung der literarkritischen Vorschläge zu 2 Kön 21 bietet I. W. PROVAN, *Hezekiah and the Book of Kings. A Contribution to the Debate about the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (BZAW 172; Berlin–New York 1988) 145-146. Provan selbst weist 2 Kön 21,1-18 insgesamt der exilischen Erweiterung seines nur bis Hiskia reichenden vorexilischen Königsbuch zu.

<sup>(37)</sup> Die Entsprechung von 722 v.Chr. zu 587 v.Chr. stellt erst und nur der Bezug 17,23b/25,21b her: Der Verbannungsnotiz für Israel in 2 Kön 17,23b entspricht wörtlich diejenige für Juda in 2 Kön 25,21b.

<sup>(38)</sup> Vgl. auch HOFFMANN, *Reformen*, 158 Anm. 52, bei ihm spricht jedoch derselbe Dtr von der "Sünde Jerobeams" und den "Sünden Manasses".

21,11). Die pluralische Formulierung der "Sünden Manasses" erklärt sich dadurch, daß sie nicht derart genau zu bezeichnen sind wie das Aufstellen der Stierbilder in Bethel durch Jerobeam. Wie ohne weiteres ersichtlich und auch schon oft gesehen, ist die Erwähnung der "Sünden Manasses" 2 Kön 24,3-4 als Rückverweis auf 2 Kön 21,10-15 gestaltet und setzt diesen Abschnitt im Leseablauf voraus. So läßt sich in 2 Kön 24 in den üblicherweise in dem Schlußpassus der Königsbücher 2 Kön 23,26-25,30 als Interpretamente erkannten<sup>(39)</sup> Verse 2 Kön 24,3-4.13-14.20a samt dem 2 Kön 24,3-4 eng verbundenen Abschnitt 21,10-15 eine profilierte Sachperspektive sehen, deren besonderes Interesse darin liegt, zum einen das Ende des Staates Juda bereits auf 597 v.Chr. vorzuverlegen, und zum anderen dieses Ende mit der Schuld Manasses zu begründen<sup>(40)</sup>. Den ersten Aspekt des Aussageinteresses von 2 Kön 24 in seiner vorliegenden Gestalt hat vor allem Seitz treffend hervorgehoben: "[F]or the author of Ch.24, these 597 events had an integrity all their own. They are not depicted as a 'phase' which anticipates a later, dramatic finale"<sup>(41)</sup>. Allerdings erklärt er diese Ausrichtung mit einer ebenso umständlich begründeten<sup>(42)</sup> wie unwahrscheinlichen entstehungsgeschichtlichen Hypothese: Nach Seitz bildete das Kapitel 2 Kön 24, das er für literarisch einheitlich hält, den ursprünglichen Schluß des "deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks". Das Hauptargument Seitz' besteht darin, daß für den Untergang des Südreichs ebenso eine Reflexionspassage zu erwarten sei, wie sie 2 Kön 17,7-23 für denjenigen des Nordreichs darstellt. Deshalb dürfe man das ursprüngliche "deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk" weder mit 2 Kön 23 noch mit 2 Kön 25 enden lassen, sondern habe seinen integralen Schluß im Kapitel 2 Kön 24 zu sehen<sup>(43)</sup>, das eben diese Begründung liefere. Dieser These steht vor allem der sprachliche Befund in 2 Kön 24 entgegen: Die Vv. 3-4 schließen uneben an Vv. 1-2

<sup>(39)</sup> Vgl. z.B. WÜRTHEIN, *Bücher der Könige*, 469, 473-474.

<sup>(40)</sup> Aufgrund von auffälligen Sprachberührungen kann man erwägen, ob 2 Kön 24 bereits im Bundesschluß von Dtn 28,69-29,68, den Mose mit Israel im Land Moab vollzieht, vorbereitet wird: Der Ausdruck 2 Kön 24,4, daß YHWH Manasse "nicht vergeben wollte" (לא אבה יהוה לסלח), hat in Dtn 29,19, wo Manasse wegen der mosaischen Fiktion allerdings nicht namentlich genannt sein kann, eine signifikante Parallele. Weiter fällt auf, daß das Lexem "wegwischen" von Dtn 29,19 an in Jos-2 Kön bis auf die Belege Ri 21,17 (Benjamin aus Israel) und 2 Kön 14,27 (Name Israels) prominent erst wieder in der Manassepassage 2 Kön 21,10-15, in 21,13, vorkommt, dort aber gleich dreimal (Jerusalem wird wie eine Schüssel "ausgewischt"). Vgl. zu Dtn 29 N. LOHFINK, "Der Bundesschluß im Land Moab. Redaktionsgeschichtliches zu Dtn 28,69-32,47", *BZ NS* 6 (1962) 32-56, wieder abgedruckt: DERS., *Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur II* (SBAB 12; Stuttgart 1991) 87-106; A. ROFÉ, "The Covenant in the Land of Moab (Dtn 28,69-30,20): Historico-literary, Comparative, and Formcritical Considerations", *Das Deuteronomium. Entstehung. Gestalt und Botschaft* (ed. N. LOHFINK) (BETL 68; Leuven 1985) 310-320; A. CHOLEWIŃSKI, "Zur theologischen Deutung des Moabbundes", *Bib* 66 (1985) 96-111.

<sup>(41)</sup> C. R. SEITZ, *Theology in Conflict. Reactions to the Exile in the Book of Jeremiah* (BZAW 176; Berlin-New York 1989) 178; vgl. auch bereits C. LEVIN, *Die Verheißung des neuen Bundes in ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Zusammenhang ausgelegt* (FRLANT 137; Göttingen 1985) 166.

<sup>(42)</sup> SEITZ, *Theology in Conflict*, 164-200.

<sup>(43)</sup> SEITZ, *Theology in Conflict*, 173-174.

an und Vv. 13-14 schaffen mit ihrer Aussage der Totaldeportation bis auf die "arme Landbevölkerung" eine sachlich gravierende Spannung zur detaillierten Ausführung über die Deportation der Oberschicht samt dem König Jojachin in Vv. 15-16, die ohne Vv. 13-14 sprachlich und inhaltlich glatt V. 12 fortführen. Das Argument Seitz', daß ohne 2 Kön 24 dem "deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk" die zu erwartende Reflexionspassage zum Untergang Judas entsprechend derjenigen zum Untergang Israels in 2 Kön 17 fehle, entfällt, wenn man mit O'Brien<sup>(44)</sup> erkennt, daß 2 Kön 17,7-23 mit seiner Verlagerung der Schuld von den Königen (so noch alle Aussagen in 2 Kön 23-25) auf das Volk kaum zu den ältesten Deutetexten in Jos – 2 Kön gerechnet werden kann<sup>(45)</sup>.

## V.

Ist die sachliche Ausrichtung der Manassepassagen in 2 Kön 21 (Vv. 3.5.6b.7b.8-16) und 2 Kön 23-24 (23,26-27; 24,3-4.13-14.20a) einmal erkannt, dann springt ihre Verwandtschaft<sup>(46)</sup> mit einem sowohl im Jeremia- wie auch im Ezechielbuch vorfindlichen redaktionellen Programm geradezu ins Auge, das ganz entsprechend von der Intention geleitet ist, den maßgeblichen Einschnitt in der Geschichte Israels nicht in der Zerstörung Jerusalem 587 v.Chr. zu sehen, sondern das entscheidende Gericht bereits in den Ereignissen 597 v.Chr. verortet. Vor allem K.-F. Pohlmann hat sich um die literarische Ausgrenzung und sachliche Profilierung dieser Texte bemüht und sie als "golaorientierte Redaktion" sowohl im Jeremia- als auch im Ezechielbuch beschrieben. Das Ziel dieser Redaktion bestand nach Pohlmann darin, "vorgegebene Texte dahingehend zu überarbeiten, daß allein und ausschließlich die babylonische Gola (unter Jojakin) als legitime Nachfolgerin des alten 'Israel' in Jahwes Heilsplan erscheint"<sup>(47)</sup>.

Wenn auch Pohlmanns konkrete literarkritische Operationen namentlich im Bereich der Jeremia-Erzählungen Jer 37-44 umstritten sind, so ist doch das von ihm als "golaorientiert" beschriebene Sachprofil auch von anderen Forschern — zum Teil vor Pohlmann oder selbständig — erkannt und redaktionsgeschichtlich verwertet worden<sup>(48)</sup>. Am deutlichsten

<sup>(44)</sup> O'BRIEN, *Deuteronomistic History*, 209-210.

<sup>(45)</sup> Vgl. STIPPS Kritik an SEITZ: H. J. STIPP, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit. Studien zur Textentwicklung von Jer 26,36-43 und 45 als Beitrag zur Geschichte Jeremias, seines Buches und jüdischer Parteien im 6. Jahrhundert* (BBB 82; Frankfurt a.M. 1992) 138-139. Eine alternative Erklärung — innerhalb seiner an Noth anschließenden Hypothese eines einheitlichen deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks — bringt HOFFMANN, *Reformen*, 157 vor: "2K 21 ist der vorweggenommene Kommentar des Dtr zum Untergang Judas; wie 2K 17 ist er zugleich ein katalogartiges Summarium aller Kultsünden, die zum Untergang geführt haben". Dieser Vorschlag scheitert daran, daß 2 Kön 21,16 im Verbund mit 2 Kön 24,3-4 die Ereignisse von 597 und nicht von 587 v.Chr. begründet.

<sup>(46)</sup> Vgl. bereits LEVIN, *Verheißung*, 166.

<sup>(47)</sup> K.-F. POHLMANN, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch* (FRLANT 118; Göttingen 1978) 183.

<sup>(48)</sup> Vgl. P. R. ACKROYD, "Historians and Prophets", *SEA* 33 (1968) 18-54: 52; C. R. SEITZ, "The Crisis of Interpretation over the Meaning and Purpose of the

zu greifen ist es ohne Frage in der Feigenkorbvision Jer 24, die als nicht weniger als sein sachlicher Programmtext zu gelten hat. Hier wird im Sinnbild der beiden Feigenkörbe, der eine enthält gute, der andere schlechte Feigen, die entscheidende Trennung Israels propagiert: Die guten Feigen sind die 597 v.Chr. mit Jojachin nach Babel Deportierten, die schlechten Feigen sind diejenigen, die in Jerusalem und Juda verblieben oder nach Ägypten geflüchtet waren. Der Jojachin-Gola wird die Heimkehr ins Land und die Gabe eines YHWH erkennenden Herzens verheißen, dem Rest Jerusalems und den Ägyptenflüchtlingen die Zerstreung in alle Welt und totale Ausrottung aus dem Land angesagt.

Vom Jeremia- und Ezechielbuch der golaorientierten Prägung her wird die Pointe erkennbar, die hinter der Vorverlegung des entscheidenden Gerichts von 587 v.Chr. auf 597 v.Chr. steht: Es geht darum, die Hegemonieansprüche der sprichwörtlichen "oberen Zehntausend" (2 Kön 24,14), die mit dem letzten noch eigenständigen König Judas Jojachin deportiert worden waren, innerhalb Israels zu sichern. Das setzt aber einen Kontakt der Jojachin-Gola oder ihrer Abkömmlinge mit den 597 v.Chr. im Land Verbliebenen oder ihren Nachfahren voraus. Gegeben war eine solche Situation erst in nachexilischer Zeit, als Heimkehrer der Jojachin-Gola wieder zurück ins Land kamen und Konflikte um Führungsansprüche innerhalb des perserzeitlichen Israels aufbrachen. Solche Streitigkeiten sind historisch durchaus wahrscheinlich, war doch die Jojachin-Gola nichts anderes als die ehemalige Führungsschicht des königszeitlichen Juda, deren Nachkommen die Vorrangstellung und Privilegien ihrer Vorfahren kaum vergessen haben dürften und dementsprechend wieder beanspruchten. Auf der anderen Seite wird sich das Leben im Land über immerhin drei Generationen ohne die alte Oberschicht aus der ausgehenden Königszeit organisiert und etabliert haben, so daß mit der Heimkehr von Nachfahren der Jojachin-Gola der Konflikt sozusagen vorprogrammiert war<sup>(49)</sup>. Entschieden wurde er im wesentlichen zugunsten der Gola-Theologen, wie der überkommene literarische Befund vor allem aus dem Jeremia- und Ezechielbuch ausweist: Beide vertreten prominent die Position, daß künftiges Heil für Israel nur für die mit Jojachin Deportierten vorgesehen ist, während andere Sichtweisen zwar noch erkennbar, aber von der "golaorientierten" Position im wesentlichen überdeckt worden sind.

Das Jeremiabuch ist vor allem durch den Programmtext Jer 24 "golaorientiert" geprägt, der das gesamte Buch in seinem Sinn strukturiert<sup>(50)</sup>:

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Exile. A Redactional Study of Jeremiah xxi-xliii", *VT* 35 (1985) 78-97; DERS., *Theology in Conflict*; R.G. KRATZ, *Translatio imperii. Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Danielerzählungen und ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld* (WMANT 63; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1991) 191-193; STIPP, *Jeremia*; SCHMID, *Buchgestalten*, 253-269, 366-367; vgl. auch, allerdings ohne literarkritische Differenzierungen in Jer 37-44, N. LOHFINK, "Die Gattung der 'Historischen Kurzgeschichte' in den letzten Jahren von Juda und in der Zeit des Babylonischen Exils", *ZAW* 90 (1978) 319-347, wieder abgedruckt: DERS., *Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur II* (SBAB 12; Stuttgart 1991), 55-86.

<sup>(49)</sup> Für eine Datierung der "golaorientierten" Texte in die erste Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts v.Chr. s. SCHMID, *Buchgestalten*, 267-269.

<sup>(50)</sup> S. dazu SCHMID, *Buchgestalten*, 253-269 sowie das Schaubild 434.

Als Vision schließt Jer 24 eine Inklusion zurück auf Jer 1,11-19 und liest das intervenierende Textgut als umfassende Gerichtsankündigung gegen Juda und Jerusalem. Die Vision von den zwei Feigenkörben Jer 24 präzisiert nach der ersten Deportation dann den weiteren Zukunftswillen YHWHs — die guten Feigen, die mit Jojachin nach Babel Deportierten, werden in das Land zurückkehren und sich mit neuem Herzen zu YHWH bekehren (Vv. 5-7), die schlechten Feigen, die nach 597 v.Chr. in Jerusalem und Juda Verbliebenen sowie die Ägyptenflüchtlinge, werden umkommen und ausgerottet werden aus dem Land (Vv. 8-10) — und strukturiert das gesamte nachfolgende Jeremiabuch in ihrem Sinn: Der ersten Hälfte der Feigenkorvision, 24,5-7, entsprechen die Heilsaussagen in Jer 29-33, die von Jer 24 her verstanden natürlich nur der ersten Gola gelten, der zweiten Hälfte, 24,8-10, entspricht die Darstellung des Untergangs Jerusalems und Judas sowie die Flucht nach Ägypten in Jer 37-44.

Auch das Ezechielbuch trägt als gesamtes ein golaorientiertes Gepräge<sup>(51)</sup>. Der Prophet Ezechiel wird als Figur vorgestellt, der unter der 597 deportierten Exulantschaft wirkt (Ez 1,1; 3,12-27 u.ö.). In der Grobstruktur des Buches sind vor allem die korrespondierenden Visionen Ez 8<sup>(52)</sup>-11 und 40-48 wichtig, die den Auszug und Einzug des יהוה כבוד beinhalten: YHWH befindet sich während des Exils also nicht mehr in Jerusalem, sondern zieht mit der ersten Gola nach Babel. Dazwischen wird einerseits in Ez 12-24 klar gestellt, daß es nach der Katastrophe Jerusalems keine Überlebenden geben und das Land öde und wüst darniederliegen werde (vgl. exemplarisch Ez 14,21-23; 15,8), andererseits macht Ez 33,21-29 vor den ab Ez 34 folgenden Heilsaussagen klar, daß sie nur den Angehörigen der ersten Gola gelten.

Eben dieses "golaorientierte" Programm ist es, das den Manassepassagen in 2Kön 21,23-24 ihr Gesicht gegeben hat: Aus ihm läßt sich erklären, weshalb die Schuld an der Katastrophe auf eine bestimmte Figur der vorexilischen Geschichte Judas, nämlich Manasse, konzentriert wird, weshalb die eigentliche Katastrophe in den Ereignissen von 597 v.Chr. gesehen wird, weshalb so betont wird, daß damals Jerusalem und Juda praktisch völlig entvölkert wurden (2Kön 21,13; 24,14), ja, weshalb sich 2Kön 21,3 mit dem Ausdruck אבד במות "Höhen zerstören" ezechielischen Sprachgebrauchs bedient (Ez 6,3).

## VI.

Nach alledem dürfte deutlich sein: Die Manassepassagen in 2Kön 21,\*3-16; 23,26-27; 24,3-4 sind in ihrem Aussagegehalt verschleiert, wenn

<sup>(51)</sup> Vgl. K. F. POHLMANN, "Ezechiel oder das Buch von der Zukunft der Gola und der Heimkehr der Diaspora", *Grundriß der Einleitung in die kanonischen und deuterokanonischen Schriften des Alten Testaments*. Band 2: *Die prophetischen Werke* (O. KAISER) (Gütersloh 1994) 82-102; DERS., *Ezechielstudien. Zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Buches und zur Frage nach den ältesten Texten* (BZAW 202; Berlin-New York 1992); DERS., *Der Prophet Hesekiel/Ezechiel. Kapitel 1-19* (ATD 22,1; Göttingen 1996) 27-28.

<sup>(52)</sup> Vgl. zur Datierung in 8,1 (592 v.Chr.) W. ZIMMERLI, *Ezechiel. I. Teilband, Ezechiel 1-24* (BKAT 13/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969) 209. Nach POHLMANN, *Prophet Hesekiel/Ezechiel*, 29, ist die Textgrundlage in Ez \*8-11 "golaorientiert".

man sie für "deuteronomistisch" hält. Sie vertreten nicht "deuteronomistische", sondern — allerdings ist auch das nicht mehr als ein Schlagwort — "golaorientierte" Theologie, die aber in deuteronomistischem Sprachgewand einherkommt. Die verwandte Sprache läßt aber in diesem Fall nicht auf sachliche Verwandtschaft schließen. Daß die Manassepassagen "deuteronomistisch" klingen, verdankt sich dem Umstand ihrer Einschreibung in ihren Kontext und der *kritischen* Aufnahme "deuteronomistischer" Theologie, nicht aber "deuteronomistischem" Denken. Vielmehr zeigt die subtile Umprägung und Konzentrierung vor allem von Schuldaussagen über Könige und die Bevölkerung des bereits untergegangenen Nordreichs Israels auf den Judäer Manasse, wie anders die Manassetexte über die Schuld Judas reflektieren, als dies die Texte in ihrem Umfeld tun: Nicht die Könige (2 Kön 23,32.37; 24,9.19), nicht das Volk (2 Kön 17,19; vgl. Ex 32/1 Kön 12), sondern allein Manasse ist schuld am Untergang Judas und Jerusalems, der bereits in den Ereignissen von 597 v.Chr. — und nicht erst 587 v.Chr. — seinen vollgültigen Ausdruck gefunden hat.

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#### SUMMARY

The passages about Manasseh in 2 Kgs 21,\*3-16; 23,26-27; 24,3-4 do not reflect deuteronomistic theology, even though they are couched in deuteronomistic language. They express a 'gola' theology. Statements about the guilt of the kings and people of the Northern Kingdom have been subtly changed. Manasseh alone is to blame for the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. The events of 597 B.C., not 587 B.C., bear witness to this.

# RECENSIONES

## Vetus Testamentum

Joel S. KAMINSKY, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSS 196). Sheffield, Academic Press, 1995. 211 p. 14,5 × 22. £27.50 – \$41.00

To the modern reader the Old Testament frequently appears harsh and barbaric in the punishments which are reported as inflicted on families and communities as a consequence of the offences of particular individuals within them. The innocent are punished with those who are guilty. Even more frequently disasters and defeats that befall whole nations are accounted for as divine punishments for offences committed by individuals within them. So the idea of divine retribution, which is assumed to be a fundamental reality in explaining defeat and misfortune falling upon families, towns and nations is upheld as valid, even when only one citizen has offended. The sins of the few can be visited upon the many, whose survivors may then face the task of identifying and punishing those who have caused such offence to God.

All such beliefs and actions are summed up by Kaminsky as expressions of corporate solidarity. The individual does not stand alone and the circle immediately surrounding a wrongdoer becomes involved in the inevitable judgement which must expiate the original offence. Kaminsky's thesis, which reveals in its form much of its origin as a rather original, and at times provocative, academic exploration, represents a serious examination of this phenomenon. It sets out to challenge, and counter, the claim that ideas of corporate solidarity and responsibility, and the consequential idea of shared guilt and punishment visited upon a community, are peripheral to the Old Testament. He believes rather that they are far more widely present than scholarship has been accustomed to accept. He then goes further by questioning whether modern society itself has not been unnecessarily dismissive of the validity of such biblical ideas of corporate responsibility in assuming its own superiority to them.

In reviewing an issue that has strong ethical implications, as well as reflecting on some major sociological and anthropological considerations, Kaminsky's thesis offers a refreshing challenge. It is able to point out how easily modern evaluations have lost sight of a number of less obvious assumptions in the biblical material. The most central texts for his examination are to be found in the Deuteronomistic History (Jos – 2 Kings), although he fully recognizes that individual narrative episodes must have existed independently before being incorporated into the larger work. The overall historical perspective given to the rise and fall of Israel as a nation is

found in the notion of divine retribution, which Kaminsky links directly to the notion of Israel's divine covenant, seeing this as a consistent Deuteronomistic theological theme. This in itself appears as a hazardous proceeding since the ideas of the Horeb revelation as an act of covenant-making appear only very unevenly across the Deuteronomic literature. Although Israel's national downfall is explained as a consequence of divine judgements falling on the whole nation, responsibility for evoking such divine wrath is largely focused on the misdeeds of specific named rulers. So a particular monarchist theology is presupposed in which the offenses of king Manasseh are especially singled out.

Kaminsky's survey of how scholarship has dealt with the phenomenon of corporate responsibility in ancient Israel focuses chiefly on two issues. The first of these is that of the notion of so-called corporate personality — an idea closely associated with the name of H. Wheeler Robinson, but explored by other scholars in various directions. Kaminsky draws attention to the way in which recent scholarship has been concerned either to qualify and modify Robinson's thesis (A. R. Johnson), or to reject it altogether (J. W. Rogerson). Many of Kaminsky's sympathies lie in the direction advocated by Robinson, affirming that the sense of community obtruded itself strongly over that of the individual. He dissents from Robinson, however, in that, rather than claim that this was essentially a matter of psychological difference, it must be viewed as an expression of cultic solidarity.

The other feature drawn from the history of recent scholarship focuses on K. Koch's concept of retribution in which the idea of a "circle of sin" is regarded as a form of self-evident, and self-realising, experience. Here the importance of the sacral nature of society, the danger of infringing the demands of holiness, and the whole concept of a personal God lead Kaminsky to question much of Koch's understanding. In general he sees little validity in assumptions that an Old Testament world-view, which is to be found in a strongly unified fashion as "Israelite thought", is significantly better, or more rationally defensible, than our own. The survey of scholarship leads Kaminsky to conclude that Israel's corporate solidarity was experienced as a reality and given a theological validation in terms of national holiness, itself closely tied to the concept of covenant.

Two of the three major instances which Kaminsky examines in detail depend on narrative reports in which families are punished for sins perpetrated by individual members. The most fully explored instances are those of Josh 7, in which Achan's retention of an item of clothing from the spoils of battle brings national defeat. When discovered, this offence necessarily called down a fearful divine punishment because the holiness of all Israel had been affected and God's support for the conduct of military operations had been withdrawn. The second major instance cited is that reported in 2 Sam 21,1-14 in which the descendants of the house of Saul are fearfully punished for an offence that was held to have been committed by its head. Ideas of guilt as an infringement of holiness, leading to disaster for the community, are again all involved, although in this case a strong kinship element was also involved. Nor can we ignore the important element of rival dynastic claims motivating the action.



Since the Deuteronomic History provides the major focus for Kaminsky's thesis, special interest attaches to the use made by the Historian of the alleged offences of king Manasseh (2 Kings 21,1-18; 23,26-7) to explain Judah's national downfall. These accusations clearly belong to the latest stratum to have been added to the History introducing the idea of the subsequent inevitability of the downfall of Judah as a nation. One of the weaknesses of this important point of literary criticism then lies in the way in which it highlights the introduction of apologetic motives in order to account for disaster. Kaminsky is clearly right in arguing that the Deuteronomic ideas of retribution can only claim any validity of there was assumed to be a measure of corporate responsibility. At the same time the element of special pleading in the accusations against Manasseh points strongly to a recognition that they have been introduced for a specific purpose.

Their unique apologetic aim scarcely warrants their use as instances illustrating a fundamental tenet of Israelite thought. Moreover, it is a marked feature of the Deuteronomistic History that it appears more directly focused on the good and bad effects that monarchy had on the nation, rather than on the widespread danger of individual covenant-breaking as a threat to the nation's survival.

On close examination Kaminsky's arguments used to illustrate biblical ideas of corporate responsibility appear to be less focused on issues relating to this, as a matter of legal, or social understanding, than on questions of cultic taboo. They are chiefly occupied with questions of the threat posed by infringements of holiness and, at most, serve to show that holiness imposed restraints which could cut across more widely representative ethical and legal obligations. Had Achan's sin been simply a matter of theft, it could hardly have been judged so harshly. It was its breach of cultic (and military?) codes that brought such fearful consequences. It would appear mistaken therefore to endeavour to use such narrative as illustrations of a wider concern with corporate responsibility as a matter of social-anthropological, or even legal, thinking. They simply show that early biblical ideas holiness imposed taboos which both Judaism and Christianity have found it important to modify, and where necessary disavow, in their historical development.

So Kaminsky's thesis, for all its interest in drawing attention to some of the more neglected aspects of biblical expressions of human accountability, becomes a rather archaising exercise, pleading for the re-introduction of quasi-magical concepts as an important dimension relating to the moral health of society. As it is, the concentration on holiness issues places too heavy a reliance on assumptions, which the development of a post-biblical hermeneutic rightly found it necessary to modify and largely set aside.

Behind Kaminsky's presentation there would appear to be a broader line of reasoning which seeks on one side to oppose, probably quite rightly, any idea that the Bible displays some straightforward evolutionary progression from corporate to individual accountability. The social reality of this would appear to have been better focused on the effects of the breakdown of the large kinship structures of early Israel in the course of the nation's history. More negatively, however, the thesis tries to construct a

unified picture of social accountability on the mistaken assumption that there was a coherent reality which could be described as "Israelite thought". In the process the varied forms of danger and threat — breach of taboo, usurpation of power, idolatry and suchlike are lumped together as though they all served to illustrate a uniform sense of corporate solidarity.

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John William WEVERS, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 39). Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1995. xxx-665 p. 14,5 × 22,5. \$74.95

Après avoir publié l'édition critique du Deutéronome de la LXX (Göttingen 1977) et une étude sur l'histoire de ce texte (Göttingen 1978), J. W. Wevers consacre un troisième ouvrage à des «Notes» sur le Deutéronome grec, comme il l'avait fait pour la Genèse et l'Exode (Atlanta 1990 et 1993). Verset par verset, les moindres détails du texte sont scrutés: on retrouve le travail méthodique du savant éditeur du Pentateuque, sa compétence et sa rigueur. Cet ouvrage, muni de trois index importants (grec, hébreu, thématique), sera fort utile pour les biblistes.

Dès la première page, J. W. W. annonce en effet que son ouvrage est conçu comme une aide pour les étudiants de l'Ancien Testament «not expert in the use of the Greek text but who wanted to make use of the understanding the Hebrew text». Il définit ainsi d'emblée l'intérêt de la LXX comme un outil précieux au service de l'hébreu. Considérée à bon droit comme la plus ancienne «interprétation» du texte hébreu, la LXX est ici admirablement étudiée dans ses mécanismes de traduction, comparée mot par mot à l'hébreu, et cela afin que le lecteur trouve de l'aide «in understanding the LXX text over against the Hebrew».

Les Notes de ce volume portent donc sur le texte grec, tel que J. W. W. l'a établi de façon critique pour reconstituer l'état le plus ancien: celui-ci est supposé en correspondance presque parfaite avec son modèle hébreu, au point de permettre la confrontation indispensable aux biblistes pour un éventuel usage du grec. J. W. W. reprend les données du premier appareil critique de son édition, les développe et les commente: il signale les «plus» et les «moins» marqués par les obèles et les astérisques de l'édition hexaplaire, ainsi que les leçons conformes au Samaritain; il annonce quelques repentirs sur les choix de son édition, principalement des modifications d'ordre grammatical (la liste en est donnée en Appendice A). Son ouvrage s'enrichit d'une étude nouvelle sur l'Alexandrinus dont il dégage le caractère «recensionnel» et la tendance à l'expansion (Appendice B). J. W. W. souligne l'intérêt de la «tradition» du texte «vivant», ses révisions et sa vulgarisation jusqu'au texte byzantin, sans toutefois commenter dans ses Notes ces variantes puisqu'elles ne servent pas à établir le texte le plus ancien. Tout est fait pour qu'avec cet instrument de travail le bi-

bliste puisse dégager le texte original de la LXX, celui que l'on peut lire « en face de l'hébreu ».

Sans doute peut-on accepter l'hypothèse selon laquelle le texte ancien de la LXX était en correspondance presque parfaite avec son modèle hébreu, lui-même supposé presque identique au TM. Cependant, à trop rapprocher le texte grec du TM, on court le risque de minimiser l'originalité de la LXX. Par exemple, comme on le sait bien, la conformité d'une leçon du grec avec le TM ne peut servir de critère pour juger de son appartenance à la LXX ancienne. Telle remarque de J.W.W. tendrait à le faire croire (en 6,1, la majorité des manuscrits grecs écrivent « notre Dieu », et non « votre Dieu »: la phrase, dit J. J. W., a un sens excellent, mais « it is not original LXX as a glance at the hebrew shows »). La prééminence accordée à l'hébreu gêne parfois pour lire la LXX: la bonne connaissance du sens de l'hébreu entraîne à découvrir trop aisément le sens du grec, en laissant de côté quelque divergence (en 12,3, J. W. W. écrit que le grec traduit littéralement l'hébreu: « You shall destroy their name from that place », alors que le grec donne une autre syntaxe: « et leur nom disparaîtra de ce lieu », καὶ ἀπολείται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῶν ...). On fait appel à l'hébreu pour justifier le sens d'un mot grec, alors que ce sens s'explique par les usages proprement grecs (en 12,6, l'emploi d'ὁμολογία rattache les dons à l'idée de « convention » et le mot peut désigner les « dons convenus » sans qu'il soit nécessaire de dire qu'il prend le sens du mot hébreu). Parfois l'hébraïsant comprend un tour grec, parce qu'il y voit *immédiatement* le sens de l'hébreu, alors que l'helléniste doit faire un détour par la littérature grecque pour en justifier l'emploi (en 29,19(18), J. W. W. traduit aisément ὅσιά μα γέναιτο par « may it be allowed for me that ... » et signale en bas de page qu'Aquila a rendu comme on s'y attend le simple mot hébreu עִלְמָה par εἰρήνη; mais cet usage inattendu d'ὅσια doit être justifié par une étude d'ὅσιος dans la pensée grecque).

S'adressant à ses bibliastes non spécialistes de grec, J.W.W. consacre une autre large partie de ses notes à expliquer les caractéristiques grammaticales de la LXX: la composition des phrases, l'ordre des mots, le sens des coordinations et des subordinations, le jeu des préposition, les temps des verbes, les décalques de l'hébreu, etc. Les Notes, très précises, avec des listes d'occurrences analogues, utilisent les travaux antérieurs de l'auteur et les travaux plus récents de nos collègues d'Helsinki (A. Aejmelaeus, 1982; R. Sollamo, 1979; I. Soisalon-Soininen, 1987). Quelque attention est accordée aux aspects sémantiques du lexique grec. Ainsi, en 28,64, la distinction de δουλεύω et de λατρεύω. De façon générale on constate que les notes lexicales sont rédigées par rapport à l'hébreu plutôt que pour une étude de la langue de la LXX prise pour elle-même. J.W.W. s'interroge rarement sur le « pourquoi » d'un mot choisi plutôt qu'un autre lorsque les mots sont presque synonymes. En 12,2 pourquoi le traducteur du Deutéronome emploie-t-il θίς, qui désigne des « dunes » et par extension des « collines », et non βοῦνος traduction habituelle du nom hébreu qui nomme certains lieu de culte idolâtrique? Lorsqu'en 12,5 et 14 le grec (selon B) nomme les « villes » là où l'hébreu parle des « tribus » (attesté en A, retenu par J.W.W.) une note dit qu'il s'agit d'une « auditory error » (πόλεων pour φυλῶν); mais

le choix d'un mot qui désigne la « cité » grecque, comme plusieurs fois ailleurs à la place de la mention hébraïque des « portes » de la ville (12,15.17.18.21...), ne serait-il pas plutôt un signe de la tendance à « actualiser » le texte ? En 12,4 le lieu unique de culte sera choisi, selon l'hébreu, « parmi toutes (*mikkol-*) vos tribus ». Le grec écrit « dans l'une (ἐν μιᾷ) de vos tribus » : J. W. W. considère cette expression comme un substitut pour le sens partitif de la préposition hébraïque : c'est sans aucun doute exact, mais n'y a-t-il pas aussi le souci d'anticiper et d'insister sur ce qui sera dit en hébreu en 12,14, « dans une (une seule) de vos tribus » ?

L'ouvrage de J. W. W. suscite l'admiration pour sa clarté, sa précision et sa richesse. Au delà de l'examen de ses « Notes », nous pouvons prolonger la réflexion en posant deux des questions d'intérêt plus général qui concernent les politiques éditoriales de la LXX : dans l'étude d'un texte de la LXX, quelle place peut-on donner aux témoignages tardifs et indirects de son texte, à ses commentaires ? Et, d'autre part, l'annotation ne doit-elle pas être accompagnée d'une traduction complète en une langue moderne ?

Dans son introduction, J. W. W. se réfère avec considération à l'ouvrage que nous avons récemment publié à Paris sur ce même Deutéronome grec (C. Dogniez et M. Harl, *Le Deutéronome, traduction du texte grec de la Septante*. Introduction et Notes [La Bible d'Alexandrie 5; Paris 1992]). Il montre la complémentarité de nos travaux et renvoie parfois dans ses Notes à nos commentaires. La compréhension du texte est, presque sans exception, tout à fait identique dans les deux livres et les notes coïncident pour une large part. Nous avons en commun le même objectif immédiat, expliquer la langue du traducteur et repérer les divergences par rapport à l'hébreu. Cependant nous ajoutons à ces préoccupations d'autres considérations, qui correspondent à l'orientation générale de nos travaux, car l'approche de la LXX n'est pas tout à fait identique pour les biblistes et pour les hellénistes ou les historiens du judaïsme hellénique. J. W. W. représente ici, de façon remarquable, l'approche d'un bibliste ; mais il a également lui-même affirmé plus d'une fois ailleurs que la LXX mérite d'être prise pour elle-même, qu'elle a sa propre valeur d'œuvre juive en langue grecque. Aussi nous semble-t-il possible, à propos de son annotation, de justifier l'attention plus grande que nous portons aux variantes tardives et aux commentaires anciens.

La LXX n'est pas le terme de l'histoire textuelle de la Bible hébraïque. Elle en est plutôt un maillon situé dans une chaîne continue. La confrontation du grec et de l'hébreu, utile pour le bibliste, sert aussi à faire apparaître la valeur propre du texte grec, sa cohérence, ses prises de position. Les divergences qui séparent la LXX du TM ne sont pas toujours à interpréter comme des accidents ou des erreurs ; elles peuvent être des « actualisations », comme le signale souvent J. W. W., des harmonisations, des choix stylistiques ; et, plus encore, il arrive qu'elles soient les signes d'une volonté interprétative. Les leçons spécifiques du texte grec ont alors une valeur positive, elles sont les indices de l'originalité de la LXX à côté d'autres témoins du judaïsme hellénistique ; elles sont parfois à l'origine d'une tradition exégétique continue et ininterrompue, comme le montrent, par exemple, les travaux de G. Vermès et certaines de nos notes dans La Bible d'Alexandrie

(ainsi peut-on situer le texte LXX de Dt 5,22, «et il (Dieu) n'ajouta rien», à côté des traditions aboutissant aux Targums, aux rabbins et aux Pères). Les documents *postérieurs* montrent ce que la LXX avait de distinct, qui fut confirmé ou contredit par d'autres traditions exégétiques, refusé et corrigé dans les «révisions», ou au contraire prolongé et commenté par les lecteurs qui n'ont plus accès au texte hébreu. Les interprétations du texte grec par Philon d'Alexandrie et Josèphe, les traditions exégétiques de Qumrân, les targums, les citations du Nouveau Testament et même les commentaires des Pères, tous ces documents attestent des «réceptions» multiples d'un texte dont l'ambiguïté doit être reconnue: une ambiguïté inhérente au texte, source de lectures plurielles. Des interprétations de la LXX, qui apparaissent comme des contre-sens si nous maintenons que le sens de l'hébreu mérite seul d'être retenu, ont parfois de la valeur. Un tout petit exemple: en certains passages, la préposition ἀπό est un simple décalque de l'hébreu pour indiquer une orientation (ici en Dt 4,41, «vers l'Est»): elle est prise par Philon d'Alexandrie et d'autres commentateurs anciens de la Genèse au sens habituel de «loin de», ce qui entraîne des développements théologiques ou spirituels (notes sur Genèse 11,2, en BA 1). Certaines de ces lectures dégagent une signification «possible» de la LXX que nous ne savons pas toujours reconnaître, trop pressés que nous sommes de ne voir dans le texte grec qu'une «traduction» de l'hébreu. Les dérivations de sens de la LXX, de peu d'intérêt pour l'hébraïsant, font partie authentiquement de l'histoire complexe du texte biblique, de sa vie au cours des siècles. Un autre exemple est celui du découpage du texte de la LXX: celui des commentateurs anciens donne parfois des unités de sens tout aussi légitimes que celles que nous adoptions sous l'influence de la ponctuation traditionnelle de l'hébreu.

J. W. W. a choisi de ne pas donner une traduction complète du Deutéronome grec, à la différence de ce que nous faisons dans les volumes de la Bible d'Alexandrie. Son propos est de limiter les traductions aux passages difficiles. En fait, J. W. W. traduit beaucoup de petites parties du texte: des mots, des propositions, mais c'est souvent toute la phrase qui pose un problème d'interprétation. Ainsi en 28,66, à propos du participe κρεμαμένη, J. W. W. écrit: «The notion of 'being hung' might be understood as 'hung like a thread'». Mais quel est le lien entre l'idée de «menace» et la fin de la phrase, seule traduite ici? Comment comprendre: «et la vie sera *suspendue comme une menace* devant tes yeux (?)... et tu n'auras pas confiance pour ta survie»? (la note en BA 5 signale les différentes compréhensions que les lecteurs, de Philon aux Pères, ont eues de ce participe et de tout le verset). Pour ces traductions partielles, J. W. W. est conduit à les situer dans des paraphrases, à les introduire par des formules du type: «ce que la LXX veut dire est que...». Une économie d'espace dans la rédaction des notes aurait laissé la place pour une traduction complète. Ici se marque la différence entre nos deux traditions scientifiques. Selon les habitudes anglo-saxonnes, il n'est pas nécessaire de donner une traduction des textes anciens qu'accompagne une savante annotation. La tradition universitaire française, au contraire, accorde la plus haute importance à l'établissement d'une traduction complète du texte étudié. Par cette traduction minutieusement rédigée, avec la recherche des meilleurs équivalents modernes capables de

donner une bonne compréhension du texte ancien, l'auteur du livre engage sa responsabilité, montre la « traductibilité » du texte édité, peut-être aussi sa beauté d'œuvre littéraire. Nul autre que J.W.W. n'est plus compétent pour offrir une traduction du Pentateuque grec: une traduction nécessaire en anglais, puisque, à notre grand regret, les étudiants anglophones auxquels s'adresse notre collègue ne lisent pas le français. Mieux que quiconque, J.W.W. connaît et comprend les sens impliqués dans le grec de la LXX, témoin de l'hébreu mais aussi texte nouveau ayant sa propre signification, sa propre importance.

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Mario CIMOSA, *Guida allo studio della Bibbia greca (LXX). Storia – Lingua – Testi*. Società Biblica Britannica & Forestiera. Roma, 1995, 272 p. 18 × 25

Ce « guide » est un premier instrument de travail proposé par la Société Biblique Italienne pour les étudiants qui ne pourraient pas aborder la LXX à l'aide de recherches « complexes et raffinées ». Il se compose de trois parties visant à la simplicité: une histoire générale de la LXX, avec des indications sur les livres en particulier (on ne sait pourquoi sont absents *Josué*, *Juges*, *Règles* et *Paralipomènes*); des observations grammaticales sur le grec de la LXX; une anthologie de textes grecs de la LXX, traduits et commentés. L'auteur utilise largement les introductions à la LXX récemment publiées (notamment en français) ainsi que les ouvrages classiques sur le grec de la LXX. Son choix de textes est en revanche plus personnel: il s'agit presque exclusivement de « prières » choisies à travers tous les livres de la LXX. On retrouve ici l'intérêt de M. Cimosà pour le vocabulaire étudié dans une publication antérieure (*Il vocabolario di preghiera nel Pentateuco greco dei LXX* [Quaderni di Salesianum 10; Roma, 1985]) mais on s'étonne que ce spécialiste n'ait pas plus soigneusement mis au point les traductions dont il accompagne les textes: on peut relever un grand nombre d'inexactitudes. Dans l'ensemble de cet ouvrage, l'auteur a une préoccupation dominante: tout en reproduisant les données habituelles sur la LXX, il donne une orientation particulière à ses propos; s'adressant à des étudiants qui abordent le « Nouveau Testament », il veut leur montrer que la communauté de langue entre LXX et NT a servi de « pont » pour faire passer la révélation de l'« Ancien Testament » jusqu'au « Nouveau ». Il juge que les LXX ont créé tout un vocabulaire qui a fait « progresser » la signification de la révélation hébraïque vers la Bible chrétienne. S'il recommande à bon droit de l'autorité scientifique de R. Le Déaut en parlant d'une « actualisation » du message biblique, il exagère, me semble-t-il, lorsqu'il affirme que la LXX a été « normative » pour le NT et, quelles qu'aient été mes propres études sur ce sujet, le doute que l'on puisse montrer en toute certitude dans l'œuvre juive des changements importants qu'elle aurait introduits dans le message biblique. En simplifiant et en forçant certaines considérations sur le grec de la LXX,

sur l'importance de son texte pour l'exégèse chrétienne, on risque de donner une vision fautive d'une version faite par des juifs, dans la seule considération de leur piété et de leurs convictions juives. Il faut bien des nuances pour parler de la LXX comme d'un chaînon dans l'histoire d'une «révélation». Etablir un lien trop fort entre LXX et NT et considérer celui-ci comme «l'ultime phase» d'un développement, c'est oublier de situer la LXX au sein d'autres œuvres juives, au sein d'une plus longue histoire de la Bible hébraïque.

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Beat WEBER, *Psalm 77 und sein Umfeld*. Eine poetologische Studie (BBB 103). Weinheim, Beltz Athenäum Verlag, 1995. xiii-362 p. 17 × 24,5. DM 98,—

The work attempts, according to the Forward, to investigate new approaches to Psalms interpretation without giving up the fundamental orientations of previous historical research (v). The interpretation of Psalm 77 within the book builds from the level of verses to strophes and stanzas to consideration of the entire psalm and its surrounding field. The first of three major sections lays theoretical groundwork involving contemporary literary theory both outside and within the bounds of biblical interpretation. The second section surveys Psalm 77 itself from the level of individual verses to considerations (predominantly synchronic) of the overall identity and use of the psalm. The third and final section investigates the wider elements related to the study of Psalm 77 (predominantly diachronic) such as tradition history, redaction, intra-biblical influence, intertextuality, and canonical criticism.

The arrangement of studies which combine textual-historical approaches with contemporary theory always presents problems. Happily, Weber has not restricted form critical concerns to introductory status. Instead they are incorporated at the end of the second section along with other considerations of the psalm as a whole. In this respect the study avoids many of the difficulties which arise from the presumption that some terminus exists which disconnects previous literary criticism from more recent approaches. The contention that form and contents combine to provide the meaning of a text leads Weber to assume a text oriented strategy (29). Throughout the volume, it is this emphasis on the text that holds together the twin interests in stylistics and historical criticism.

Weber proposes three different paradigms for recent investigation of the Psalms: (1) classical historical criticism which treats the text as a "document", (2) the canonical approach which treats the text as an "attestation to faith", and (3) the approach of current literary criticism which treats the text as "artwork" (1-2). He continues by conceptualizing the relationship among the three as a set of three overlapping circles. He remains faith-

ful to the analogy in that he accords some attention to each of the three approaches with, of course, necessary preference to the second and third as befits a contemporary study of a psalm as poetry.

Alternately, I would suggest, the approaches could be viewed under the more historical paradigm of a continuum. In this way both presuppositions and conclusions of the various critical approaches could be tied to the interests of the times which produced them. For example, form criticism appeared in an age when comparative studies of literature arose on every front. Perhaps this served as compensation for (1) more "imperialistic" readings of biblical texts influenced by the presuppositions of western culture or (2) strictly historical approaches which refused to acknowledge their own presuppositions (i.e. presumptions taken as facts in compensation for the scarcity of historical evidence). Current interest in form criticism as a preliminary or initial stage in interpretation generally ignores the social settings associated with the genesis of the method. As the result, the validity of the method appears constant. The cultural context of each method should be kept in mind as a sociological control by which to gauge the authority of specific applications of that method.

Concern to allow the individual psalm to "speak for itself" could scarcely have been understood at the turn of the previous century, not to mention explicitly reader-based criticism or so called "pragmatic" interpretations with their emphasis on the dynamics of human communication. I would not argue that form criticism should not be united with later methodologies. Form criticism continues to hold promise as a framework for the application of more free-wheeling contemporary approaches. At the same time, form criticism, like all other interpretive strategies past and present, deserves no special privilege. Stated most blandly, the methods themselves, as well as their findings, should be subjected to interpretive scrutiny and understood as products of the general or specific situations which produced them.

In the opening section of the book, the coverage of literary theory blends a wealth of valuable research on poetics. The overview is thorough and the examples well selected. Perhaps the strongest feature is the choice of originating theories. The section treats the original theories (de Saussure, Jakobsen, et. al.) with minimal attention to secondary applications. His review of theory is eclectic but brief and so quite suitable to a work devoted to trial interpretation rather than theoretical framework. Such overviews are indispensable for the contemporary interpreter and especially in areas which, like Psalms interpretation, devote little attention to the theoretical. The review of recent approaches to psalms studies reveals similar selectivity and insight.

The detailed consideration of the form and content of Psalm 77 in the second major section of the book indicate the author's adeptness at exposition. The careful discussion of verses and strophes will be most helpful to future investigators of Psalm 77. This second section fills 163 pages of the work, making it the longest of the three sections. After commenting on the verses of the text, she presented Psalm 77 as comprised of seven strophes organized in four stanzas as follows: stanza one, verses



2-4 and 5-7; stanza two, verses 8-10 and 11-13; stanza three, verses 14-16 and 17-19; and stanza four, verses 20-21 (174). Junctures occur between verses 11 and 12 where the transition from lament to hymn is accomplished and between verses 13 and 14 where emphasis on meditation turns to emphasis on praise. The final brief stanza, with its mentions of Moses and Aaron, is considered a later addition to the psalm on two bases. First, it does not match the theophanic language of the unit it concludes. Second, it seems an artificial echo of verse 16. The names Moses and Aaron could function as reinforcements of priestly authority. I find little basis for challenge regarding divisions into strophe and larger units. These decisions are carefully made and ably explained.

As his discussion of the organization of the psalm drew to a close, Weber claimed the psalm identified cosmic acts with election (178). So the thunderstorm-theophany reinforced God's intent and ability to protect his covenant people. In this way salvation history is defended by the recognition of God's control. I would suggest the psalmist (i.e. the voice of the text) shows awareness of the radical contrast between the divine cosmic action of the theophany and the image of God leading his people as a flock. The storm language suggests the power to upset and destroy. This destruction implies God's attitude toward Israel's impediments and enemies. After all, there is little functional difference between God's treatment of Egyptian soldiers and the sea that drowned them. Both receive his fury and are "overturned". The Israelites on the other hand receive opposite treatment. They are spared the divine hand of wrath and receive pastoring "by the hand of Moses and Aaron". The contrast between God's wrath and providence alternates throughout the psalm. It is this assumption (God's nurture for his own and opposite retributions for his enemies) which sets up the questioning of the sufferer. The worshiper wonders if remembrances of deliverance remain valid and answers the question with a hymn. God's tenderness and God's power teach the worshiper the same lesson, namely, his faithfulness. Only the awful silence of the present leaves the speaker puzzled.

The connection between universal theology and common experience on the level of the individual worshiper appears in several laments and salvation history hymns (Psalms 69, 79, and many others). God's action on behalf of the worshiper is another manifestation of his cosmic power. There is some recognition of this in Weber's discussion involving the "hand" of God's leadership and the "arm" of his threat (184) as well as other tensions in Psalm 77 (185). The affirmation that the deity does in fact intervene in response to the difficulties of an individual worshiper or an individual people appears the key to the functioning of laments. This suggests that the dynamics of the lament stand in close connection to the theology of election and all that it implies.

This is part of a wider challenge to Psalms scholarship. Form criticism remains as the most useful tool from the previous generation of Psalms study. The application of form criticism in this study is well conceived. Yet much work remains with regard to connections among genres. This would involve use of never critical approaches — canonical criticism, stylistics,

grammatical criticism and others — to indicate the semantic and linguistic confluence of the various genres. Weber's text represents a welcome step in this direction. Weber claimed diachronic and synchronic concerns could not be rigidly separated (188). For this reason he referred to the "threshold of the diachronic" as his exposition of Psalm 77 drew to a close. Form criticism offers much promise in this regard because it involves distinctions in style and expression as well as historical contexts.

Weber shows some inclination to revise the form critical approach: He names the psalm a lament of a mediator rather than an individual or group lament (191). In this way cultic officials offered a singular voice as the voice of the people based on the mediation of Moses (v. 21). So, the names Aaron and Moses were added to the psalm to designate the cult-functionaries responsible for the performance of the Psalm. Lamentations 3 also falls into the category, lament of a mediator.

In the final section of *Psalm 77 und sein Umfeld* Weber discusses the origins of the psalm and its relation to other biblical texts to which it alludes. He deals with the historical placement of the psalm in its immediate context in the Psalms. Psalm 77 ends with the reference to Moses' leadership. Psalm 78 exhibits continuity with this, beginning with an allusion to a quotation of Moses (Deut 32,1) and presenting David as the new Moses (290). Finally, the third section devotes a good deal of attention to the placement, content, and development of the Asaph psalms.

On the whole, Weber achieves his aim of offering an advancement of text based study of the Psalms. He noted a lack in poetic studies involving stylistic elements of poetic texts, particularly studies based on the form of the written text. On the general level, it is likely this work will receive less attention than it deserves, because its readership is limited on two restricted perimeters: It is offered for those interested in (1) Psalms study and (2) poetic criticism. On the other hand it should receive much attention from Psalms specialists and especially those with distinct interests in Psalm 77 and the Asaph psalms. Weber's treatment of Psalm 77 originated with his doctoral dissertation of which the book is a revision. Its dissertation-like quality may actually add to its appeal for specialists. Yet its contents will elude certainly the general reader and more narrowly, biblical specialists outside the field of Hebrew Bible studies.

Weber concludes with a provocative statement on the intent of psalmic literature: A psalm is more than a document and more than an artwork: Psalms function as dialogues between God and humans (312). This could lead in the direction of rhetorical criticism of the ancient or contemporary variety. Attention to the persuasive language of the Psalms would suggest Speech Act concerns. Further, the suggestion of the Psalms' dramatic qualities would provoke interest in characterization, plot, and divisions into constructs of acts and scenes. The field remains open for future considerations of the Psalms which employ purely text based or reader based approaches. Meanwhile, we may be grateful for bridge building volumes like this one which link former approaches to contemporary literary theory.

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Gunild BRUNERT, *Psalm 102 im Kontext des vierten Psalmenbuchs* (SBB 30). Stuttgart, Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1996. 328 p. 14,5 × 20,5. DM 79,—

This extensive and detailed study of Ps 102 is a dissertation at the University of Münster under the direction of Erich Zenger. It is for that reason not surprising that it bears the characteristic marks of a German dissertation with exhaustive attention to detail, and that it reflects the concerns of Professeur Zenger's own important work concerning the "canonical" place and function of the Psalm.

The study is divided into three predictable parts. First, Brunert offers a helpful survey of the history of the interpretation of the Psalm, paying attention in turn to Jewish readings in targumic and midrashic modes, usage in the New Testament, the Ancient Church (Greek and Latin), the Reformers, and finally modern historical criticism with particular reference to Gunkel. It is strikingly evident that the Psalm has been enormously supple and responsive to the varying agenda of the interpreting community. The Psalm seems to function, as Brunert reports it, as a Rorschach test in which the Psalm becomes a willing vehicle for a variety of interpretive interests. In early Jewish interpretation, the Psalm serves as "a school for prayer". In early Christian exegesis with its Christological passion, the Psalm provided material for reflection upon the transitoriness of humanity and the eternity of God. These latter themes are held in tension, in Christian reading, with the more historical accent upon exile and return. In the Latin Church, not surprisingly, the Psalm is employed in order to call attention to the pervasiveness of sin and so becomes a prayer of repentance. Luther, continuing the emphasis of Augustine, continues the accent upon sin, whereas Calvin particularly notes the powerful hope of the Psalm of course understood, as had become commonplace in Christian reading, with Christological reference.

The summary of modern historical-critical work on the Psalm traverses mostly familiar territory. The accent on exile and liberation is now situated midst questions of the relation of individual and community, the form of the Psalm (mixed genre), and the matter of cultic and/or eschatological usage. The culmination of the history of interpretation, as will be expected, concerns a "canonical approach" which pays particular attention to the work of Brevard Childs and Odil Hannes Steck, and to the more particular studies of Ch. Brüning (1992) and H. Schweizer (1986). This historical survey is enormously helpful. While it pertains especially to Psalm 102, in fact the survey concerns the entire Psalter. I note only the odd omission of Dietrich Bonhoeffer who, in my judgment, contributed peculiarly to contemporary issues concerning the relationship between criticism and theological interpretation.

The second long section of the book concerns "internal textual analysis", i.e., the conventional work of criticism that characteristically occupies a dissertation. In turn Brunert takes up questions of textual criticism, poetic analysis, literary-critical analysis with consideration of the unity of the Psalm, form criticism, and finally tradition-criticism analysis.

In each of these, the writer shows herself to be a thorough, competent, and sensitive reader of the text.

In his "poetological" analysis, Brunert is concerned with the actual "speech" of the poem. She understands the speech to be as much an affective enterprise as it is a cognitive-pedagogical offer, so that the utterance itself is a medium for *experiencing* that which is being *uttered*. That is, the utterance itself is constitutive of the reality of the speech, and so latitude is to be given to the speaker for the exercise of creativity (100-103). Given this quite fresh perspective, Brunert traces through the several sections of the Psalm the poignant rhetorical maneuvers that constitute the prayer of an isolated speaker who is near to death and utterly alone, cut off from God. Brunert identifies v. 11 as rhetorical high point in the lament of vv. 4-12 which focuses upon YHWH. Brunert marks well the decisive transition at v. 14, in which the poetry turns from the isolated speaker to the community, to the sure rule of Yahweh, and the hope-filled themes of praise and new creation.

The poem is seen to be organized around two primary sections, the lament of vv. 4-12 and praise in vv. 14-23. The antithesis between these two units sets up the contrasts which dominate the poem. The faith asserted concerns Yahweh as "ganz anderen" (167). The accent upon Yahweh resolves the isolation of the speaker and so provides a powerful assertion of Yahwistic hope in the face of the situation of complaint.

The dramatic movement of the Psalm as it becomes evident in poetic scanning is considered afresh in the literary-critical analysis and then yet again in the form critical discussion. Brunert's judgment is that the original Psalm is the complaint of vv. 4-12 which has been supplement by the addition of the hymnic elements (vv. 14-23), together with the conclusions of vv. 25 and 28, which provide a governing contrast of eternity and transitoriness. The hymnic supplement draws the lament into the orbit of Zion theology, so that the lament-petition is transposed into an enactment of profound trust.

The three-fold analysis under the rubric of poetry, literary, and form analysis all come to the same conclusion. Beyond those elements of the discussion, in the analysis of tradition history, the completed Psalm is then considered in relation to (a) sapiential thought about the images of God/humanity/world, not unrelated to the book of Job, (b) Zion themes of hope, and (c) accents on creation and new creation that are linked to II Isaiah. Thus the completed Psalm is an entry point to the major theological-interpretive resources of the Old Testament as they have emerged out of the exile into full-blown Judaism.

In the final section of the book, Brunert takes up "holistic" analysis, i.e., the setting and function of this Psalm in the Fourth Book of the Psalter, Pss 90-106. While acknowledging Childs's primary influence, it is not without interest that such "canonical" questions were already raised by Franz Delitzsch and Charles Briggs. Brunert pays special attention to the work of Gerald Wilson and of course to Zenger who treats the fourth book under the rubric, "Israel and the church in a common covenant with God" (245). Thus the question is raised about a fresh consideration of the relation

of Israel and the church. In his approach to the canonical question, Brunert takes up a variety of previous studies which have focused on smaller units within the fourth book, especially concerning Psalms 90-92, 93-100, and 101-104. She gives particular attention to the way in which Psalms 101-104 bear witness to a convergence from different forms and different themes. Appeal is made to the voice of the king in Psalm 101, only now it is a voice in exile that appeals to the royal covenant as a ground of hope. Focus is then placed upon Yahweh's own covenantal loyalty.

Seen in larger perspective, the David of Psalms 101-104 is linked to Moses in Psalms 90-92 and 105-106. In the end we are offered a convergence of three themes in the Fourth Book, (a) Moses, (b) David, and (c) the theology of the kingship of Yahweh in Zion. Brunert offers a rich inventory of parallel phrasings which indicate the pervasiveness of the themes which together have been worked into a quite new articulation. On the one hand, it is the sovereignty of Yahweh which dominates the Psalm as "a school for life". On the other hand, it is praise and new creation which instructs in "a school of prayer". The work of *life and prayer* in Israel concerns Yahweh's new rule which overrides every problem and crisis in Israel's practice of Yahweh, and so the Psalm stands at the center of a great assertion of hope, peculiarly urgent in Israel's exile.

This is altogether a thorough and comprehensive study which is massively informed by previous scholarly work and by encyclopedic knowledge of textual material. The author exhibits great theological sensitivity and offers a study which is a model in method. My modest criticism is in the context of an altogether positive appreciation of the study.

In that context, it is to be noted that the study, done with methodological rigor, is unnecessarily repetitious. By considering separately poetic, literary and form analysis, the same material and the same insights receive excessive presentation. Perhaps it is time to reconsider the genre of dissertation, especially of a German variety, which because of genre, at times must labor what in effect has become obvious.

Second, if the poetic "speaker" can be as subjective and inventive as Brunert rightly allows, can the outcome of the poem be so rigorously tied to conventional form-critical dissection? While Brunert wants to give the poet ample room for creativity, the analysis operates as though the poet must perforce adhere to tight critical distinctions of genre. Is it necessary that the "original" should be lament to which praise is added? There is nothing that supports such a judgment except conventional assumptions of genre. Could not the original piece have aimed precisely at the juxtaposition of lament and praise? This is a point at which we may usefully reconsider older methods, as our more recent sense of the text as a creative act might indeed permit holding together what older methods have endlessly rent asunder.

Third, if the aim of such a study is "the final form of the text", one may wonder what point is served by what is inevitably a largely conjectural "pre-history". If, as seems required, holistic interpretation plays precisely upon juxtaposition, then the juxtaposition (here of lament and praise) may be regarded not as a late development, but as definitional for the artistic

work. I sense that the procedure reflected here in the work of Brunert constitutes an embrace of new method and perspective, accompanied by an uncertainty or timidity about relinquishing older methods.

Fourth, the whole approach of holistic, canonical interpretation is of course a matter of dispute, perhaps more so in the Psalter than in some other texts. In this study, Brunert, following Zenger, has provided additional compelling evidence for the legitimacy of this approach. This study gives voice to a radically changed paradigm of study. Only by the slow mobilization of such evidence does a new paradigm claim the field. Brunert contributes to that new model in important ways.

Thus the questions I raised pertain not primarily to Brunert's study, but to the mix of assumptions now operative in the field. If we are obligated to reiterate all older methods and their conclusions while at the same time valuing what is new, studies can only grow more and more complex and longer and longer. Perhaps courage is required which permits briefer attention to the "pre-history" for the sake of focus on the force and effect of the canonical form. Brunert's splendid study no doubt reflects the "in-between" place we are in terms of method. The outcome is an awareness of Psalm 102 which offers this single Psalm as a place from which Old Testament theology could be freshly undertaken, a major achievement indeed!

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R. NORMAN WHYBRAY, *Proverbs* (The New Century Bible Commentary). Grand Rapids, W.B. Eerdmans, 1994. xxxii-446 p. 14 × 21,5. \$19.99

R.N. Whybrays Kommentar ist die Frucht einer langen und intensiven Bemühung um das Buch der Sprichwörter. Schon Whybrays Dissertation von 1962, gekürzt veröffentlicht als *Wisdom in Proverbs. The Concept of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9* (SBT 45; London 1965) und ergänzt durch "Some Literary Problems in Proverbs I-IX", VT 16 (1966) 482-496, befaßte sich mit Spr 1-9 und kam in der Frage der Formen zu wegweisenden Erkenntnissen. In der Folgezeit ließen weitere, vielbeachtete Untersuchungen zum Sprüchebuch und zur Weisheitsliteratur Whybray zu einem international anerkannten Fachmann auf diesem Gebiet werden. Der nun erschienene Kommentar wird von Untersuchungen zum sozialen Hintergrund der Texte (*Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs* [JSOTSS 99; Sheffield 1990]), zur Kompositionsgeschichte (*The Composition of the Book of Proverbs* [JSOTSS 168; Sheffield 1994]) und zur Forschungsgeschichte (*The Book of Proverbs. A Survey of Modern Study* [History of Biblical Interpretation Series 1; Leiden 1995]) begleitet.

Nach Maßgabe der Kommentarreihe legt Whybray keine eigene Übersetzung des Textes vor, sondern kommentiert die Revised Standard Version. Whybrays Fähigkeit, verwickelte Probleme knapp und präzise auf

ihre entscheidenden Punkte zu reduzieren, garantiert seinen kurzen einleitenden Bemerkungen (3-20) wie auch seinen philologischen Anmerkungen einen bleibenden Wert. Man kann diesen Kommentar den wichtigen jüngeren Werken von L. Alonso Schökel / J. Vilchez Lindes (*Sapienciales I. Proverbios* [Nueva Biblia Española; Madrid 1984]) und A. Meinhold (*Die Sprüche* [ZBK.AT 16.1/2; Zürich 1991]) zur Seite stellen.

Der Kommentar vereinigt traditionelle und innovative Züge. Whybray sieht im Sprüchebuch eine Sammlung von Sammlungen unterschiedlicher Herkunft und Geschichte. Die einzelnen Teile verdanken ihre Entstehung jeweils verschiedenen Wachstums- und Kompositionsprozessen. Die Wachstumsstufen von Spr 1–9 glaubt Whybray auf der Basis seiner Untersuchung von 1965 nachzeichnen zu können. Er rechnet in den Lehrreden mit vorexilischem Material, sieht jedoch von konkreten Datierungen ab. Ein innovativer Zug des Kommentars ist das große Interesse an der Komposition der Einzelspruchsammlungen 10,1–22,16 und 25–29. Whybray gibt die traditionelle Zweiteilung der Sammlung 10,1–22,16 in Spr 10–15 und 16,1–22,16 auf (153). Tatsächlich wurde diese Hypothese in der Forschung noch nie ausreichend begründet. Dazu, sowie zu den Gründen, die dennoch eine Einheit Spr 10,1–15,32 plausibel machen, siehe ausführlich R. Scoralick, *Einzelspruch und Sammlung. Komposition im Buch der Sprichwörter Kapitel 10–15* (BZAW 232; Berlin 1995).

Nach Whybray verweisen die Texte des Sprüchebuches auf zwei verschiedene soziale Hintergründe. Die Kapitel 1–9; 22,17–24,22 und auch 24,23–34 gehören in den Zusammenhang der Erziehung junger Männer einer wohlhabenden städtischen Oberschicht. Diese Erziehung situiert Whybray in der Familie, obgleich er Schulen zumindest prinzipiell nicht ausschließt. Die Einzelsprüche der Sammlungen 10–22,16 und 25–29 hingegen weisen auf ein kleinbäuerliches Milieu. Dort existierten die meisten Einzelsprüche als Sprichwörter im mündlichen Gebrauch. Teilweise könnten sie bis in vorstaatliche Zeit zurückdatieren (6). Die Sammlung und Komposition der Sprichwörter in Kleingruppen und größeren Abschnitten ist Schreibern zu verdanken, von denen einige vermutlich Verbindung zum Königshof hatten (Spr 25,1; 149). Whybray widmet ihnen keine besondere Aufmerksamkeit.

Ein frühnachexilischer Endredaktor hat dem Buch 1,1–7 bzw. 1–9 vorangestellt, die sieben Überschriften wenn nicht erstellt so doch übernommen und mit dem alphabetischen Akrostichon 31,10–31 einen Rahmen um das Ganze hergestellt. Er hat keine systematische Redaktion vorgenommen. Vermutlich wollte er ein Kompendium israelitischer Weisheitsliteratur erstellen (15–16).

Whybray nimmt keine nachträgliche JHWHsierung einer ursprünglich rein säkularen Weisheit mehr an. Dieser Gedanke lag noch seinem einflußreichen Artikel von 1979 ("Yahweh-Sayings and their Contexts in Proverbs 10,1–22,16", *La Sagesse de l'Ancien Testament* [ed. M. Gilbert] [BETL 51; Leuven 1979] 153–165) zugrunde. Die ältere Weisheit sprach schon im Horizont des JHWH-Glaubens. Das Sprüchebuch und die übrigen biblischen Traditionen verhalten sich komplementär zueinander (12). Die redaktionellen Einfügungen von JHWH-Sprüchen in Spr 1–29, mit de-

nen Whybray rechnet (152), sind Explikationen. Sie wurden nicht in einem Zuge eingefügt.

Ich möchte nun kritische Bemerkungen zu zwei Bereichen anschließen: (1) zur Kommentierung der Kapitel 1–9 und (2) zur Kompositionsanalyse der Einzelspruchsammlungen.

(1) Whybrays Kommentar zu den Kapiteln 1–9 ist in vielen schwierigen sprachlichen Fragen eine Fundgrube für wohlausgewogene Urteile (z.B. zu Kapitel 8, 22–31). Nur nebenbei sei auf einen kleinen Druckfehler aufmerksam gemacht: auf S. 74 muß zu V. 35 der Verweis auf GK § 145 I — nicht 135 — gehen.

Die Kommentierung zu Spr 1–9 verdeckt jedoch durch ihr starkes Interesse an den Urbausteinen und Entwicklungsstufen wichtige Züge des Endtextes. Es kann zudem skeptisch stimmen, daß die von Whybray 1965 entwickelten und im Kommentar übernommenen literarkritischen Hypothesen weithin auf Ablehnung gestoßen sind (so bei B. Lang, W. McKane, R. E. Murphy). Ich lasse die Fragen zur Literarkritik im Moment einfach ruhen. Zwei Beispiele können die Kritik erläutern.

(a) Das erste Beispiel ist die Auslegung von Spr 2. Whybray rekonstruiert nach dem Modell von Spr 5, 1–6 eine ursprüngliche Lehrrede 2, 1.9.16–19 zum Thema "fremde Frau". Die Verse 20–22 gehören mal dazu (51), mal gelten sie als Zusätze (57). Dieser Text wurde in zwei Stufen erweitert, zunächst um die Rede von Weisheit (vv. 2–4.10–15), dann um das Thema JHWH (Vv. 5–8). Kapitel 2 als Ganzes wiederholt dann in ermüdender Weise die immer gleichen Gedanken (50).

Jüngste Untersuchungen zu Spr 2 kommen zu völlig anderen literarkritischen Urteilen. D. Michel ("Proverbia 2 – ein Dokument der Geschichte der Weisheit", *Alttestamentlicher Glaube in seiner Geschichte* [FS. H. D. Preuß] [Hrsg. J. Hausmann–H.-J. Zobel; Stuttgart 1992] 233–243) hält z.B. das Thema "fremde Frau" für einen Zusatz zu einem ursprünglichen Text Vv. 1–4.9–15.20. Christl Maier (*Die 'fremde Frau' in Proverbien 1–9. Eine exegetische und sozialgeschichtliche Studie* [OBO 144; Freiburg/CH und Göttingen 1995] 84–107) hält nur Vv. 5–8 und 21 für sekundär.

Spr 2 besteht formal aus einem einzigen Satz, der in 22 Zeilen gegliedert ist. P. Skehan hat noch auf weitere alphabetisierende Züge des Kapitels hingewiesen. Spr 2,9 spricht von מִשְׁרִים und מִשְׁפַּט צֶדֶק und eine Parallele dazu gibt es im Buch nur im Prolog, Spr 1,3. Diese beiden Züge erinnern an Whybrays Endredaktor, der 1,1–7 programmatisch voranstellte und das Buch durch ein alphabetisches Akrostichon in 31,10–31 abrundete. Das fällt Whybray nicht auf. Darüber hinaus kündigen die beiden parallelen Themen "böse Männer" (Vv. 12–15) und "fremde Frau" (Vv. 16–19) die Kapitel 3–7 inhaltlich an (so schon Plöger), so daß Spr 2 auch eine strukturierende Funktion übernimmt. M. Fox ("The Pedagogy of Proverbs 2", *JBL* 113 [1994] 233–243) hat jüngst das Kapitel als kohärenten und hochreflektierten Text verstehen lassen. All das schließt eine sukzessive Entstehungsgeschichte nicht prinzipiell aus. Wenn jedoch Whybray in seiner einleitenden "Outline of Contents" des Sprüchebuches (19–20) Kapitel 2 als Lehre zur "avoidance of strange women" anführt, so ist das ein Symptom für den verengten Blickwinkel, unter dem er den Text kommentiert.



(b) Ein anderes Beispiel. In Spr 1–9 sind die in der Text-Welt Sprechenden nicht immer eindeutig identifiziert. Sieht man einmal von der Überschrift (Spr 1,1) ab, so werden die Eltern beide als Lehrende eingeführt (1,8). Die Mutter ist eine mögliche Sprecherin der Lehrreden (mit Ausnahme von 4,1–9). Zu diesen Fragen siehe A. Brenner–F. van Dijk-Hemmes, *On Gendering Texts. Female and Male Voices in the Hebrew Bible* (Biblical Interpretation Series 1; Leiden 1993). Die Texte in Spr 31 stützen diese Annahme: 31,1–9 ist die Lehre einer Königmutter; die "starke Frau" ist in 31,26 als lehrende Mutter gezeichnet.

Whybray spricht nun in seinem Kommentar zu Spr 1,8 der Mutter neben dem Vater eine aktive Rolle in der Erziehung zu. Sie ist "teacher" im vollen Sinne. Das gilt jedoch nur für den soziokulturellen Hintergrund der Texte. Im Sprüchebuch ist stets ein "Vater" der Sprecher der Lehrreden (23,45 u.ö.). Im Kommentar zu Spr 8,32–36 wird aus dieser Voraussetzung dann ein Argument für eine Textstörung. Die Anrede "Söhne" werde sonst nur durch den Lehrer gebraucht; für die personifizierte Weisheit sei sie nur hier belegt und darum nicht ursprünglich. Tatsächlich tritt die Weisheit in 8,32 jedoch als lehrende Mutter auf. Diese Möglichkeit ist durch die Parallelisierung der "starken Frau" am Ende des Buches mit der Weisheitsgestalt gestützt. Auch die starke Frau ist eine lehrende Mutter (31,26). Es betseht kein Anlaß, textliche Unordnung zu vermuten.

Im Spiel der Stimmen in Spr 1–9 und 31 bieten vielleicht die Verse 31,28–29 noch eine Aufgipfelung. V. 29 zitiert das Lob, das die Söhne und der Ehemann (V. 28) der starken Frau spenden. Erheben hier die bislang stummen Adressaten des Buches (fiktiv) ihre Stimme? Kann man in den Söhnen und dem Ehemann der starken Frau//Frau Weisheit auf der Ebene der Rahmenbildung um das Sprüchebuch die doppelten Adressaten aus 1,1–7 wiederfinden, die Unerfahrenen und die schon Weisen? Es scheint mir erwägenswert.

In beiden angeführten Beispielen deckt Whybrays Kommentierung Züge der Kapitel 1–9 zu. Bei Spr 2 geht der sinnvolle Aufbau und der kompositorisch programmatische Charakter verloren; für 8,32–36 wird durch die Beseitigung einer vermeintlichen Textstörung ein wichtiges Element im Spiel einander teilweise überlagernder Textstimmen ausgeschaltet.

(2) Whybray gehört zu den weniger Autoren, die schon früh nach den Prinzipien der Spruchanordnung in den Sammlungen 10,1–22,16 und 25–29 fragten (siehe "Yahweh-Sayings").

Whybrays Forschungsgeschichte (*The Book of Proverbs*, 61) ist zu entnehmen, daß der Kommentar schon 1992 abgeschlossen war. Die 1994 erschienene Studie *Composition in Proverbs* präziserte dann die Ansätze zur Kompositionsanalyse. An gleicher Stelle bemerkt Whybray auch, daß in Fragen der Komposition jüngst eine stärkere Hinwendung zu formalen Elementen (wie Alliterationen, Wortpaare und Wiederholungen) zu verzeichnen sei. Whybray selbst ist kein Vorreiter dieser Entwicklung, er notiert solche Phänomene nicht systematisch und steht ihrer strukturellen Relevanz oft skeptisch gegenüber.

Im Kommentar zu Spr 10,1–22,16 folgt Whybray vielfach den Vorschlägen Plögers, der lockere Gruppierungen verschiedener Art annimmt.

Auch das kapitelweise Vorgehen lehnt sich wohl an Plöger an. Einen eigenen Ansatz bietet Whybrays Gedanke, daß Sprüche wie 10,1; 12,1; 13,1; 14,1 und 17,21.25 jeweils — analog zu den Lehrreden — eine zum Zweck der Erziehung zusammengestellte Einheit einleiten. Das Ende dieser Einheiten ist außer im Fall von 10,1-5 und 17,21-25 nicht recht festzulegen. Die einleitenden Sprüche haben keine eindeutig verbindenden Charakteristika. Der Gedanke selbst wurde in schärfer konturierter Form schon von Ewald und Delitzsch vorgebracht. Ausführlich zu den Aporien solcher Vorschläge sowie auch zur problematischen Orientierung der jüngeren Kommentare an der Kapiteileinteilung siehe Scoralick, *Einzelsspruch und Sammlung*, 95-108.

Die Kompositionsanalyse der Spruchsammlungen dient vor allen Dingen dazu, einen Kontext für die in sich offenen und vieldeutigen Einzelssprüche zu gewinnen. Whybray rechnet konkret damit, daß Schreiber mündlich umlaufende Sprichwörter aus bäuerlichem Milieu zum Zweck der Erziehung zu lockeren Einheiten komponierten. Die Schreiber saßen vielleicht am Königshof.

Geradezu ein Paradebeispiel einer Komposition in diesem Sinne liefern nun die Analysen von Bryce und Van Leeuwen zu Spr 25,2-27 (G.E. Bryce, "Another Wisdom-Book in Proverbs", *JBL* 91 [1972] 145-157 und R.C. Van Leeuwen, *Context and Meaning in Proverbs* 25-27 [SBLDS 96; Atlanta, 1988]). Eine formal durch chiasmatische Wiederholungen gerahmte (חֶקֶר-כְּבוֹד Vv. 2.27b) und gegliederte (אֶכֶל-דָּבָשׁ Vv. 16.27a, auch צֶדֶק-רָשָׁע Vv. 5.26) Texteinheit versammelt Sprüche, deren kontextuelle Ausdeutung durch die Einleitung mit dem Thema König (Vv. 2-7) sowie durch weitere Indizien als Lehre für junge Männer bei Hofe plausibel wird.

Whybray akzeptiert die Abgrenzung der Einheit, wehrt sich jedoch dagegen, daß diese Komposition an den Königshof oder in seine Umgebung gehören soll (358-359; *Composition*, 120-121). Zwei Argumente sprechen für Whybray dagegen. Zum einen weisen Königssprüche nicht auf den Hof, und zum andern haben die Sprüche in 25,8-15 nur allgemeine, sozusagen nicht hofspezifische Inhalte.

Nun ist die Annahme, daß Sprüche über Könige nie bei Hof entstanden sind, unbewiesen und wenig plausibel. In seiner Forschungsgeschichte verweist Whybray für diese These auf den Artikel "Die Königs- und Hofsprüche und der Ursprung der israelitischen Weisheit", *VT* 33 (1983) 257-271 von F. Golka. Whybray mißverstehen jedoch die logische Struktur der Argumentation. Golka zeigt keineswegs, daß alle Königssprüche fern vom Hof entstanden sein *müssen*. (So gibt Whybray den Gedanken wieder, *The Book of Proverbs*, 30.) Er zeigt nur, daß sie fern vom Hof entstanden sein *können*, und daß dies in vielen Fällen auch plausibel ist. Im Einzelfall ist die Frage jeweils neu zu stellen. Spr 25,2 könnte meines Erachtens ohne weiteres bei Hofe entstanden sein. Uns fehlen jedoch klare Kriterien, um solche Fragen zu entscheiden. Whybray neigt hier zu pauschalen Antworten. Allzugroße Vereinfachungen helfen jedoch nicht weiter.

Selbst wenn man nun einmal hypothetisch annimmt, die Königssprüche 25,2.3.5.6 seien bei "kleinen Leuten" entstanden und mündlich verwendet worden, so können sie dennoch in der vorliegenden Texteinheit zur Erziehung junger Männer bei Hofe verwendet worden sein. Sie haben durch

die Verschriftung und Komposition einen neuen Kontext und einen neuen Sitz im Leben erhalten. Sprichwörter sind für so etwas immer offen. Der allgemeine Sinn der Einzelsprüche in Vv. 8-27 wird durch den neuen Kontext konkretisiert. Whybray rechnet mit solchen Sekundärverwendungen und Rekontextualisierungen. Es ist völlig unverständlich, warum er die Analyse von Bryce und van Leeuwen für 25,2-27 nicht akzeptieren kann.

Whybrays Kommentar wird der ohnehin regen Aufmerksamkeit der Forschung auf Komposition in den Einzelspruchsammlungen weiteren Ansporn geben. Das gilt es zu wüdigen, auch wenn die dabei unterbreiteten Vorschläge und Ansätze nicht alle überzeugen.

Ein Kommentar zum Sprüchebuch, besonders zu den Einzelspruchsammlungen, kann seinen Verfasser leicht zur Verzweiflung treiben. In Whybrays klaren und präzisen sprachlichen Analysen ist trotzdem kein Zeichen von Ermüdung zu spüren. Hie und da blitzt sogar noch Whybrays eigener Humor auf (siehe zu Spr 17,12). Wir haben dem um die Sprücheforschung verdienten Autor für einen wertvollen Kommentar zu danken.

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Antonio MINISSALE, *La versione greca del Siracide*. Confronto con il testo ebraico alla luce dell'attività midrascica e del metodo targumico (AnBib 133). Roma, Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1995. 332 p. 16,5 × 24. Lit. 65.000 – \$44.00

L'intricata situazione del Siracide non ha rappresentato per Minissale un ostacolo talmente insormontabile da impedirgli di intraprendere lo studio di un tema così importante.

Nell'introduzione (1-30) l'A. espone in modo riassuntivo il «metodo midrascico-targumico» per poter delineare l'orizzonte ermeneutico in cui si debba situare il traduttore greco del Sir. Pone in rilievo una profonda analogia del metodo di traduzione nei LXX e dei Targum pur riconoscendo l'originalità della versione greca. Descrive ciò che sarebbe stato l'approccio midrascico-targumico del Siracide sintetizzando criticamente le posizioni dei principali studiosi (R. Smend, N. Peters, M. S. Segal). Prende in considerazione le monografie dei seguenti autori dedicate allo stesso soggetto: M. Fang (distingue divergenze di tipo linguistico e teologico); L. Kergourlay (confronta il Siracide greco con il Targum); B. Wright (confronto di G [testo greco] con H [testo ebraico] analizzando l'ordine delle parole, la segmentazione del loro significato, la corrispondenza qualitativa delle parole). La lettura di queste opere conduce Minissale a rilevare il basso tasso di letteralità della traduzione greca (26).

L'A. cerca di mettere in risalto lo stile letterario e le concezioni teologiche del traduttore greco del Siracide rivalutando il metodo midrascico-targumico, da una parte, e tenendo presente, dall'altra, i fattori ideologici e stilistici che presumibilmente hanno guidato il traduttore. La sua condizione di testimone indiretto dell'originale ebraico, Sir greco in questo studio

appare più chiaramente come espressione della cultura religiosa del giudaismo ellenistico.

Per eseguire questo tipo di analisi della versione greca di Sir, l'A. si propone di classificare le divergenze tra H e G attribuibili all'interpretazione del traduttore (26) dividendo la sua opera in due parti. Nella Parte I sono analizzate dieci pericopi scelte tra le parti del Sir riportate da più di un ms. ebraico. Dopo l'analisi formale e testuale di H si passa all'analisi della versione greca nella quale G viene confrontato con H sulla base di sei rubriche: corruzioni testuali, lettura diversa di H da parte di G, variazioni descrittive, variazioni tematiche, tecniche di traduzione, aggiunte ed omissioni del traduttore. La seconda parte è composta di Tabelle sintetiche nelle quali vengono analizzati, secondo le categorie adoperate nella prima parte, molti altri esempi delle divergenze tra H e G presenti nel resto del libro, e inseriti gli esempi esaminati nella parte prima..

Lo studio di Minissale rappresenta una analisi minuta, particolareggiata, quasi esaustiva non solo del metodo di traduzione, ma anche della lingua e del grado di vicinanza della versione greca con l'ebraico. Ci troviamo dinanzi a un valido contributo, fatto con rigore e onestà, per una migliore conoscenza di una versione che è espressione peculiare della fede e della pietà del giudaismo ellenistico, ma anche costituisce un messaggio integrato nella cultura cristiana. Quest'opera rappresenta pure un buon apporto per un futuro dizionario dei LXX.

Rimangono comunque delle questioni aperte. La tesi sarebbe più chiara e convincente se tenesse più conto del fatto che tradurre è un'attività gnosologica e la traduzione non avviene attraverso una trasposizione puramente verbale. Usare una lingua, infatti, è già utilizzare una determinata interpretazione del mondo e della storia, un'interpretazione condensata in schemi verbali, in collegamenti sintattici e in un vocabolario. Si sente una certa imprecisione nell'uso di espressioni, come: «attività midrascica», «metodo targumico», forse perché si tratta di termini spesso inflazionati. Forse sarebbe utile ricordare che l'attività midrascica è presente sia nel Sir ebraico, come pure in Sap. Si richiederebbe una maggiore chiarezza dei criteri nel passare dall'edizione di Ziegler a quella di Rahlfs. Non sembra che il testo greco di Sir 4,25<sup>a</sup> eviti il nome di Dio e lo sostituisca con ἀλήθεια per riverenza, ma semplicemente perché preferisce un linguaggio più intellettuale (42-43). A p.62 la spiegazione di 11,4-6 sulle trasformazioni operate dalla versione greca sarebbe stata più chiara distinguendo adeguatamente καύχημα da δόξα. Va lodata l'accuratezza con cui viene presentata la densa bibliografia tranne quella in lingua spagnola dove ci sono molti errori soprattutto per ciò che riguarda gli accenti. Dovrebbe trovar posto nella bibliografia l'esposizione panoramica di P.-M. Bogaert, «Septante et versions grecques», *DBS* 68 (1993) 536-692.

L'opera del Minissale è un contributo rigoroso agli studi sul Siracide greco; ma proprio perché da questa ricerca si deduce che non si trovano nella versione grandi innovazioni né grandi cambiamenti, si auspicherebbe una maggiore prudenza nell'affermare che il traduttore di Sir abbia praticato un metodo midrascico-targumico.

### Novum Testamentum

J. C. O'NEILL, *Who Did Jesus Think He Was?* (Biblical Interpretation Series 11). Leiden–New York–Köln, E.J. Brill, 1995. 238 p. 16,5 × 24,5. Dfl 120,00 – \$71.00

Il libro di O'Neill è un esempio dichiarato di come un cultore dell'esegesi storica si pone al servizio della fede nei termini in cui questa viene espressa dalla teologia dogmatica. Egli infatti nella Introduzione dichiara *apertis verbis* l'intenzione che sta all'origine del suo lavoro: difendere la verità delle dottrine concernenti la Trinità e l'Incarnazione, mostrando che Gesù (come molti Giudei suoi contemporanei) credeva che Dio fosse Tre in Uno e Uno in Tre e che il Figlio eterno di Dio era nato o doveva nascere per vivere una vita pienamente umana e morire per i peccati del mondo. A monte, dunque, c'è un intento evidentemente apologetico. I vari capitoli richiederebbero molto spazio per essere analizzati, ma noi qui ci accontentiamo di discutere brevemente solo alcune tesi specifiche.

Va subito detto che il capitolo settimo, da cui deriva il titolo del libro stesso, è molto interessante. Agganciandosi al capitolo terzo («The Hidden Messiah»), l'Autore vi afferma la tesi che, se Gesù non disse mai apertamente di essere il Messia, fu per conformarsi a una tradizione giudaica, secondo cui il Messia alla sua venuta non avrebbe subito rivelato apertamente la propria identità. Anche se la documentazione addotta non è molta (anzi a p. 48 si riconosce che la prova più forte si trova proprio nella storia di Gesù), viene offerto un buon trattamento dell'ambigua formula «il figlio dell'uomo» (cf. 122-132). Ma gli interrogativi suscitati dal libro sono molti.

Fin dal primo capitolo, dopo una premessa storica sull'ermeneutica cristologica non-ortodossa a partire dal deismo del 1700, l'Autore nega che la più antica cristologia testimoniata nel Nuovo Testamento fosse di tipo adozionistico in senso stretto, come se Gesù fosse stato costituito Messia e Signore solo a partire dalla risurrezione e non lo fosse prima. I testi esaminati più da vicino sono At 2,36 e Rm 1,4, dove sembra che Dio costituisca Gesù in una condizione che prima non lo riguardava. Sarebbe stato necessario tuttavia precisare il linguaggio: nel testo di At si parla di Messia e Signore, mentre in Rm abbiamo la qualifica di Figlio di Dio. Orbene, se è possibile attribuire storicamente la qualifica di Messia già all'autocomprensione del Gesù terreno e alla percezione che di lui ebbero almeno i discepoli, non si può però negare che il titolo di Signore è esclusivamente postpasquale. L'esegesi proposta da O'Neill mi appare comunque preconcepita. Egli infatti richiama il caso di Saul e Davide per dire che, se è vero che furono fatti re in un preciso momento, dal punto di vista di Dio però erano stati scelti da sempre come tali. Ora, non si può certo negare che una elezione eterna valga anche per Gesù, il cui insediamento regale avvenne certamente non a seguito di una cernita tra molti candidati; ma ci si può chiedere se ciò basti per negare che ci sia stato per lui *in quanto uomo* un vero salto di qualità e che quindi la sua umanità abbia ottenuto ciò che in precedenza davvero non possedeva. Analogamente si dica del caso di Telemaco, addotto per di-

re che, se è vero che si prospetta la possibilità che Zeus lo possa fare re di Itaca (cf. *Od.* 1:386-7), il verbo *fare* significa solo *insediare* e quindi non si tratterebbe di un vero cambiamento ontologico. Ma, come precisa il verso omerico, Telemaco avrebbe diritto per nascita di diventarlo, mentre nel caso di Gesù, se un analogo diritto potrebbe essere adombrato in Rm 1,3 con l'accento alla discendenza davidica, tuttavia il suo insediamento in quanto Risorto è privo di ogni qualsivoglia parallelismo. Del resto, questo passo paolino avrebbe avuto bisogno di una analisi di tipo *traditionsgeschichtlich* per distinguere la tradizione dalla redazione.

Nel capitolo quarto O'Neill giunge a sostenere che anche a Qumran il Maestro di Giustizia fu ritenuto non solo Messia (cf. 1QpHab 8,1-3), ma addirittura come il Figlio incarnato di Dio, almeno da alcuni suoi discepoli. Questa tesi viene suffragata da quattro indizi. Il primo è esterno e proviene da Fl. Giuseppe, il quale parlando degli Esseni ci informa che per loro la bestemmia riguarda non solo Dio ma anche «il nome del legislatore» (*Bell.* 1,145); O'Neill identifica indiscutibilmente questo legislatore con il Maestro di Giustizia, senza chiedersi se non si tratti piuttosto di Mosè, tanto più che lo storico non dice «il 'loro' legislatore». Il secondo indizio consiste nel fatto che non solo si dice del Maestro che ha aperto la fonte della vita (e si cita CD 6,4-11, dove però il testo parla soltanto dell'«interprete della Legge»), ma che egli stesso si identifica con questa fontana; a questo proposito si cita 1QH 8,4, dove però il testo non esprime una identificazione diretta (come scrive O'Neill a p. 70: «himself was the fountain, placed as a fount of rivers in a dry place»), poiché il testo ebraico ha la preposizione *be*, che giustamente la versione di F. García Martínez rende così: «You have set me in the source of streams in a dry land». In terzo luogo, l'Autore si richiama a 11QMelch dove il biblico Melchisedek non solo assume dei tratti celesti ma viene chiamato «dio» e si dice che ritornerà, suggerendo così l'idea di una precedente discesa; certo il passo è molto forte, ma la lettura qui proposta sembra maggiorare il senso del testo (almeno per quanto riguarda l'affrettata identificazione di Melchisedek con il Maestro di Giustizia), che viene letto in termini molto più sobri per esempio da J. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star* (New York-London 1995) 118-119 e 142. Da ultimo, rifacendosi alla battaglia escatologica descritta in 1QM, O'Neill spiega il silenzio di questo rotolo sul Maestro di Giustizia con l'affermare, da una parte, che egli si identifica con il Principe della Congregazione e, dall'altra, che i titoli di Signore e Re della Gloria (cf. 1QM 12,7-12) si riferiscono non a Dio ma a questo personaggio come eroe-guida dei combattenti. Non si può fare a meno di scorgere in questa operazione una interessata maggiorazione dei testi, i quali si possono leggere anche molto diversamente.

Certo è possibile trovare nel Nuovo Testamento fondamenti molto chiari della fede trinitaria e incarnazionista, come ben dimostra il capitolo cinque del lavoro di O'Neill. Ma il capitolo sei, che si sforza di provare che la Trinità e l'Incarnazione sono già dottrine giudaiche (appoggiandosi in gran parte sui discussi *Testamenti dei XII Patriarchi*), è accettabile solo se per Trinità e Incarnazione si intende qualcosa di ben diverso da ciò che intende la fede cristiana. E soprattutto si potrebbe portare una serie di altri testi, che vanno in un senso totalmente contrario a essa.

Il nono e ultimo capitolo tratta del Quarto Vangelo, sostenendo una tesi molto originale. Secondo O'Neill il Quarto Vangelo non è opera di un evangelista che alla fine del secolo I avrebbe arricchito la tradizione gesuana con l'apporto di una propria cristologia forte; esso, invece, consisterebbe in una combinazione editoriale di due diversi gruppi di materiale: l'uno, una serie di piccole unità drammatico-narrative da cui è assente ogni nuova idea sull'identità di Gesù; l'altro, una fonte di rivelazione (di bultmanniana memoria) che invece sottolinea la statura divina di Gesù. Questo secondo tipo di materiale, però, risalirebbe a un periodo addirittura anteriore al ministero di Gesù e proverrebbe da circoli giudaici di veggenti, che credevano di avere avuto accesso al cielo e aver udito parlare lo stesso Figlio di Dio celeste. Essi, dopo essere stati convinti che questo Figlio era Gesù e non il loro Maestro, avrebbero applicato a Gesù le loro parole profetiche. Purtroppo va constatato che il ricorso a una *Offenbarungsquelle* oggi non è più tenuta in gran conto dagli esegeti, per non dire che il suo spostamento all'indietro fino a un periodo pre-cristiano è difficilissimo da provare, se non impossibile, a meno di accontentarsi di pure ipotesi (cf. p. 187: «surprising conclusion») che però non aiutano l'esatta comprensione del testo.

In conclusione, il volume di O'Neill appare non soltanto originale ma anche audace. Non c'è da stupirsi se esso susciterà discussioni e polemiche. Il suo merito comunque consiste nel tentativo di rinnovare la riflessione sul mistero della figura di Gesù e sull'inevitabile sfondo culturale giudaico, in base al quale molto si spiega della sua identità.

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Raymond E. BROWN, S.S., *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave. A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels. With an Appendix: The Question of A Pre-markan Passion Narrative*, by Marion L. SOARDS (The Anchor Bible Reference Library). New York, Doubleday, 1994. XXVII, XIX-1608 p. 16 × 24

Man muß schon lange zurückdenken, um im deutschsprachigen Raum eine ähnlich voluminöse und inhaltsreiche Abhandlung über die Passionsgeschichte der vier Evangelien zu finden wie sie von einem der Großmeister der us-amerikanischen katholischen Exegese hier vorgelegt wurde. In über zehnjähriger intensiver Arbeit hat er nach seinem "*The Birth of the Messiah*" (New York <sup>2</sup>1993) einen weiteren hochqualifizierten Ergänzungsband der bedeutenden Kommentarreihe "Anchor Bible" hinzugefügt, der einen weiteren zusammenhängenden Textteil der Evangelien auf eine gewohnt intensive Weise auslegt. Der formale Aufbau der Textkommentierung ist im gleichen Stil — wie bei allen Bänden der Anchor Bible üblich — gehalten: auf eine um Nähe zum Urtext bemühte Übersetzung folgt ein detaillierter

Kommentar, dessen wichtigsten Ergebnisse anschließend in einer Analyse in einen größeren Zusammenhang, sei er kompositioneller bzw. theologischer Art, gebracht und betrachtet werden. Beide Teile werden ständig von einer umfangreichen, fast vollständigen, die gesamte Forschungsgeschichte wenigstens der letzten 100 Jahre dokumentierenden Bibliographie begleitet. Vergleicht man nun den Aufbau des Kommentars mit den zwar alten, aber analog gestalten Auslegungen zu den evangeliaren Passionsgeschichten im deutschsprachigen Raum von H. Olshausen, *Biblischer Commentar über sämtliche Schriften des NT II* (Reutlingen 1834) 371-562 bzw. von A. Nebe, *Die Leidensgeschichte unseres Herrn Jesu Christi nach den vier Evangelien*, 2 vol. (Wiesbaden 1881), dann sticht der Fortschritt in methodischer Reflexion und im Umfang des bis heute angesammelten Wissens und historischer Mutmaßungen sogleich ins Auge. Der erstere der beiden alten Kommentatoren beginnt seine Auslegung mit dem letzten Mahl Jesu (Mt 26,17-35; Mk 14,12-31; Lk 22,7-38 [Joh 13,21-29]). Nebe eröffnet seine Auslegung mit der letzten Leidensweissagung Mt 26,1-2, Brown hingegen mit der Gebetsszene in Gethsemane (Mk 14,26-31; Mt 26,30-35; Lk 22,39; Joh 18,1a), weil die Abendmahlszene — schon in der markinischen Version als Passamahl interpretiert — nur wenige Rückschlüsse auf das zu Jesu Tod führende Ereignis zulasse. Gleichzeitig verteilt er zudem die Hinweise auf die redaktionellen Vorbereitungen und verdeckten Hinweise der Einzelevangelisten für ihre spezielle Passionsinterpretation im vorangegangenen Erzählverlauf auf die entsprechenden Zielaussagen in deren Passionsgeschichte selbst (z.B. Lk 2,34 = S. 33. 989 Anm. 14; bzw. Lk 4,13 = S. 32. 69. 160-161; 293 oder Lk 9,22 = S. 33. 424). Obwohl alle Evangelisten mit der Grablegungstradition ihre Auslegung der Passionsgeschichte beenden, signalisiert der bei Brown gewählte unterschiedliche Beginn einen bedeutenden methodischen Fortschritt. Die Zwei-Quellen-Theorie hat sich durchgesetzt und läßt auch keinen Seiteneinstieg, etwa über pseudepigraphische Texte wie das Petrus-evangelium als angeblich älteste Überlieferung (vgl. 1317-1349), mehr zu. Dann bleibt nur noch das Verhältnis der johanneischen Passionsgeschichte zur synoptischen zu klären. Hier folgt Brown dem traditionsgeschichtlichen Modell, das er schon in seinem bedeutenden Johanneskommentar in derselben Reihe (1966-1970) vorgestellt hatte: Das Johannesevangelium repräsentiert eine von den Synoptikern direkt unabhängige Weiterentwicklung einer vorevangeliaren Passionstradition, deren Kern aus der allmählichen Verbindung von der Mahl- mit der Verhaftungsszene mit nachfolgenden Berichten über Verurteilung, Kreuzigung und Grablegung bestand, an den sich anschließend verschiedene weitere Szenen anlagerten. Dieses Konglomerat wurde zeitlich versetzt einerseits in Richtung auf die vormarkinische bzw. andererseits zur johanneischen Traditionsbasis gelenkt und dort autonom — synoptisch wie johanneisch — literarisch-theologisch fortentwickelt. Nur zwischen der mündlichen vorlukanischen und vorjohanneischen Überlieferung gibt es erkennbar Kreuzbefruchtungen (vgl. u.a. 86-93. 742. 1173. 1196). Außerdem ist bei ihm jeder Versuch einer Harmonisierung aller Texttraditionen zugunsten einer historischen Rekonstruktion der dramatischen Ereignisse aufgegeben. Zugleich wird auch die letzten Jahrzehnte bestimmende redaktionsgeschichtliche Perspektive, die narrative wie



theologische Eigenständigkeit der Einzelevangelisten bei der Darstellung und Deutung der Ereignisse zu betonen, nicht zum allein leitenden Prinzip erhoben, sondern ein Kompromiß gewählt. Nun wird die Passionsgeschichte synoptisch-synchron in vier aufeinander folgende Akte (Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha, Grab) unterteilt und gemeinsam in ihrer Unterschiedlichkeit gelesen und zugleich ausgelegt. Daraus folgt konsequent, daß auch historische Fragen (vgl. u.a. 328-397. 676-722. 814-820. 945-968. 1207-1211. 1262-1264. 1350-1378), etwa nach der geschichtlichen Plausibilität der geschilderten Abläufe und Ereignisse (vgl. u.a. 620-621), zugelassen und kompetent beantwortet werden. Dies bedeutet aber keineswegs, daß das auf S. 4 formulierte Ziel des Werks, nämlich die theologischen Erzählabsichten der einzelnen Evangelisten (vgl. 24-35) in Bezug auf ihre Leserschaft zu beschreiben, später aufgegeben wird bzw. übersehen würde, daß die Evangelisten Traditionen übernehmen, die aus vorgegebener Predigt und Lehre über Jesus stammen (vgl. 13.83). Aufgrund der kraß differierenden Ergebnisse in der Forschungsgeschichte wird jedoch für das zuletzt erwähnte Problemfeld von einer literarkritischen Rekonstruktion der Traditionen abgesehen. Die Berechtigung für einen solchen Verzicht wird ausgezeichnet im von M. L. Soards erstellten Appendix IX über die unterschiedlichsten Lösungen zur Frage nach einer vormarkinischen Passionsgeschichte (1492-1524) dokumentiert. Vor allem aber fällt der sensible Umgang mit der Schuldfrage am Tod Jesu wohltuend auf. Alle belastenden Generalisierungen und Vorverurteilungen sind zugunsten einer differenzierten Darstellung historischer Denkmöglichkeiten (vgl. u.a. 383-397) aufgegeben.

Das Ziel des Werks, das Schwergewicht der Untersuchung auf die Aussageintention der Evangelisten zu legen, ohne eine geschichtliche Plausibilitätsstruktur — unter Verzicht auf literarische Rekonstruktionen — hinter deren Schilderungen aus dem Auge zu verlieren, ist außergewöhnlich facetten- und ertragreich. Sie kann hier nur knapp reproduziert werden. Von der markinischen Bearbeitung des historischen Leidensweg Jesu hängt die des Matthäus am weitesten ab. Beide betonen die Vereinsamung Jesu, der, von allen verlassen, einen besonders qualvollen Kreuzweg durchschreitet. Er ist von zwei Gebetsszenen gerahmt, die einen Akzent setzen, der an Hebr 5,8 erinnert. Die vordergründige Abwesenheit Gottes in diesem Geschehen wird von diesem selbst in Jesu Sterben als falsch erwiesen. Beide akzentuieren die paränetische Funktion der Leidensgeschichte für die Jünger. Sie sollen ebenfalls ihr Kreuz auf sich nehmen und ihm nachfolgen. Über Markus hinaus betont Matthäus vor allem die Verantwortung der jüdischen Leitungseliten am Tod Jesu. Lukas, obwohl er stark abhängig von der markinischen Vorlage bleibt und keine eigene Passionsgeschichtsvorlage verwendet, erweitert jene um drei weitere Szenen, die alle die Tendenz verstärken, die Leidensgeschichte nicht so qualvoll erscheinen zu lassen. Der während seines öffentlichen Wirkens heilende und verzeihende Jesus bleibt es auch in seiner Passion. Auch hier wird durch die Fortsetzung in der Apostelgeschichte an dem Schicksal des Stephanus und des Paulus die Bedeutung des Leidens des Propheten und Märtyrer Jesus für die Jüngernachfolge exemplifiziert (vgl. Lk 24,26 mit Apg 14,22). Auch die Heilsbedeutung des Todes Jesu kommt erst dort voll zur Geltung (vgl. Lk 2,34; 9,22 mit Apg 8,32-33;

20,28). Obwohl bei Johannes 50% der Textgrundlage der markinischen Passionsgeschichte fehlen und diese zudem noch im Überlieferungsstrom stark verändert erscheint, kann man deren inhaltliche Tendenz erst dann voll erschliessen, wenn man auf sie die bekannte Sentenz "von einer Passionsgeschichte mit ausführlicher Einleitung" gezielt anwendet. Jesus als der vom Vater gesandte Lebensspender gibt Lazarus dessen Leben zurück, um ironischerweise im Gegenzug von der die Finsternis liebenden Jerusalemer Leitungselite des Todes schuldig befunden zu werden. Doch er bleibt auch in seiner Passion der Handlungssouverän und triumphiert aufgrund seines Gehorsams letztlich über die Finsternis. Auf diese Weise gibt er denen, die an ihn glauben, das ihnen vom Vater geschenkte Heil 19,31-37). Alle Passionsgeschichtsvarianten sind zudem von biblischen Interpretamenten und Theologumena durchzogen, deren Bedeutung ausführlich erörtert wird.

Der historische Ertrag ist aufgrund der Quellenlage kein faktenreicher Tatsachenbericht, sondern Brown bemüht sich, aus dem Berichteten direkt geschichtliche Plausibilitätsschlüsse zu ziehen: Jesus, der von einigen Jüngern für eine messianische Gestalt gehalten wird, spricht darüber nach der symbolischen Prophetenhandlung der Tempelreinigung vom Kommerz voller dunkler Ahnung über deren Folgen und die ihm dadurch drohende Gefahr mit seinen engsten Anhängern bei einem Mahl, das jedoch kein Passamahl ist, und sucht anschließend Zuflucht im Gebet. Mit dieser Szene beginnt für Brown die eigentliche zusammenhängende Passionsgeschichte aller vier Evangelien. Durch den Tip des engen Vertrauten Judas gerät Jesus in die Hände der jüdischen Obrigkeit. Diese hat das Recht des *jus gladii* an die römische Fremdherrschaft verloren und findet bei einem Verhör in einer Verdächtigung, jener habe die jüdische Königsherrschaft angestrebt, die juristische Basis, den Prokurator Pontius Pilatus davon zu überzeugen, einen politischen Aufwiegler vor sich zu haben. Deshalb wird er zum Tode verurteilt und außerhalb der Stadt gekreuzigt. Um diesen historisch plausiblen Kern herum lagern sich weitere Traditionen an, deren historische Wahrscheinlichkeit von Brown stets neu und mit aller ihm zur Verfügung stehenden Akribie gewogen wird.

Angesichts der gebotenen Informationsfülle sowie des ausgewogenen Urteils in so vielen Detailfragen mutet jegliche Kritik beinahe wie Beckmesser an. Dennoch sollte eine kritische Randbemerkung geäußert werden. Der Kompromiß, nicht den üblich gewordenen Weg der Einzeldarstellung und -bewertung jeder evangeliiaren Passionsgeschichte für sich zu wählen, hat dem Leser eine schwere Last aufgebürdet. Er droht — spätestens nach dem ersten Akt an der auf ihn einstürzenden Fülle von Beobachtungen zu den einzelnen Texten aus der vierteiligen Tradition — zu ersticken, gäbe es als ständige Hoffnung auf ein rettendes Ufer nicht die jeden Akt sowie jede wichtige Unterszene beschließenden hilfreichen Zusammenfassungen.

Die ausgewogene Darstellung der Auslegungsgeschichte, der dort schon gesehenen Probleme, die vielen Detailbeobachtungen an den Texten selbst, die ruhige Art, historische Plausibilitäten aufzuzeigen sowie die theologischen und erzählerischen Einzelinteressen der vier Evangelisten in ihrer textlichen Kontinuität zu erweisen, macht dieses Werk für viele Jahrzehnte zu *der* Monographie über diese Thematik und zu *dem* durch Indices gut er-

schlossenen Nachschlagewerk, zu der möglichst viele Leser greifen sollten, wenn sie sich über den Stand der Forschung auf diesem vielumstrittenen Gebiet zu orientieren wünschen. Das Standardwerk mit seinen vielfältigen und weitere Diskussionen anregenden Ergebnissen wird in naher Zukunft von niemandem so leicht ersetzt werden können. Es sei denn, man verändert die Ausgangslage und schätzt die Traditionsgeschichte der evangelischen Überlieferung und darin besonders das Verhältnis der Synoptiker zu Johannes anders ein, so daß das letzte Evangelium ebenfalls nur eine kreative Neuschöpfung der synoptischen Passionstradition für andere Lesergruppen, zu einer anderen Zeit, in einem veränderten sozialen Milieu, mit einem neuen theologischen Ziel darstellt.

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William J. LARKIN Jr., *Acts* (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series). Downers Grove – Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1995. 422 p. 14,5 × 22,5. £9.95

A commentary is conditioned by the community for which it is intended. One need only contrast Venerable Bede's volumes designed for monastic readers with those of late nineteenth century German Protestant liberals written for a university audience to realize the truth of this assertion. For whom a commentary is written determines its shape and contents, as well as the choice of its author and the press which publishes it.

William J. Larkin Jr., professor of NT and Greek at Columbia Biblical Seminary and Graduate School of Missions in Columbia, South Carolina, has produced this volume on Acts for the IVP NT Commentary Series. It is a pastorally oriented commentary based on the NIV and written at the level of a North American or British university undergraduate, like those who belong to the InterVarsity Christian fellowship. This implies at least two things. First, it is written by and for those who are sympathetic with the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy. This means that the volume's assumption is that the Bible's authority extends beyond matters of soteriology to history, philosophy, science, and literary criticism. This plays out in Larkin's preoccupation with historical reliability. After all, for a Protestant evangelical, faith is based on fact not feeling. Second, it focuses on what Luke had to say to his original readers in order to see the relevance for the church today. This is expressed in terms of Larkin's concern with hermeneutics. What is unique to Acts' own time and, therefore, nonrepeatable and what is normative for us who look for the applicability of the NT's unchanging message in the ever-changing world we live in? Examples of these two tendencies are instructive.

The volume's concern with historical reliability is on nearly every page. The account of the ascension in Acts 1,9-11 harmonizes with Luke 24,50-53. Acts' and Matthew's accounts of Judas' end may be harmonized.

The coming of the Spirit on Pentecost in Acts 2 may be harmonized with that in John 20,22. The Theudas of Acts 5,36 was not the Theudas active under Fadus (AD 44-46) but rather an earlier revolutionary active at Herod the Great's death (4BC). Reference in 7,2-3 to Abraham's call in Mesopotamia and not in Haran is not really a discrepancy with the Genesis account (11,31). There is no contradiction between Paul's insistence that he received his gospel and apostleship directly from Christ (Gal 1,11-12) and Luke's portrayal of Ananias' role in Acts 9. Paul's visit to Jerusalem in Acts 11,30 is the visit of Gal 2,1-10. Acts does not present the famine visit of AD 46 (12,25) and Herod's death of AD 44 (12,20-23) in incorrect chronological order. Nothing in Paul's letters presents us from seeing him assenting to and even disseminating the apostolic decree of Acts 15. The movements of Timothy in Acts 17,1-9 and in Paul's letters are not contradictory. It is possible to see the speech of Paul in Athens as coming from the same mind as that reflected in Paul's letters. It is possible to harmonize Paul's deployment of Timothy in Acts 19,22 and 1 Cor 4,17; 16,10; 2 Cor 2,13. Though neither action predicted by Agabus' prophecy in 21,11 is reported as having been fulfilled, we do not need to conclude that he was mistaken. Paul's declaration in Acts 26,20 that after his conversion he preached the gospel throughout all the country of Judea is not a contradiction of Gal 1,22-23.

Given this concern to establish the historical reliability of Acts, it is not surprising to find the introductory questions answered the way they are. The author of Acts is Luke, a companion of Paul. The "we-passages" are indications of Luke's own participation in the events described. The date of composition is in the early 60's, before Nero's persecution. This explains the abrupt ending of Acts 28. Luke simply knew no more. The audience is represented by Theophilus, a Roman middle class official who was not yet a Christian. The purpose of Acts is evangelistic. Its genre is general history. Its historical reliability is assumed. For example, the speeches of Acts are either verbatim reports or summaries of what was actually said.

The volume's concern for hermeneutics is likewise all pervasive. Acts 1,8 is a springboard for a sermonette calling passionately for evangelization of the 12,000 distinct cultural groups that yet have no church in their language and culture. Acts 2's tongues are intelligible foreign languages, in contrast to 1 Cor 12-14's glossalalia. This phenomenon is not repeatable. The enduring relevance of Acts 2 for today is its emphasis on the Holy Spirit as enabling disciples' witness. In Acts 5,12-42 the apostles model Christian civil disobedience. Acts 6,1-7 provides hallmarks for those who sit on church boards. The gift of the Spirit in Samaria, coming after baptism, must be viewed as extraordinary, not normative. The Spirit's coming before baptism in Acts 10,44 serves a limited purpose in salvation history. It should not be taken as a normative pattern for all Christians in all times and places. Acts 13,1-3 holds up Antioch as a model for missionary vision and deployment of every church. Our Lord needs more Antiochs. Acts 13,4-5 teaches that in a day when specialist, short-term work, humanitarian relief and support services are all being called missions, the church needs to make sure it does not shift its primary focus away from the central purpose

of missions — preaching the gospel. Acts 15's apostolic decree guides all Christians to use their freedom to abstain from practices that would offend the cultural sensitivities of another. In Acts 19,1-7 what is unique to that setting are the laying on of hands and the speaking in other languages; what is normative are repentance, faith in Jesus, water baptism, and the gift of the Spirit. In Acts 20,34-35 Paul's example of working does not mandate all Christian leaders to be bivocational. Other scripture qualifies the Acts account (Luke 10,7; 1 Cor 9,11,18; Gal 6,6; 1 Tim 5,17-18). Acts 21,19 teaches that true ministry *for* God will always be ministry *by* God. Acts 26,26's "not in a corner" should give us courage to bring the gospel truth back into the public arena.

Throughout the hermeneutical concerns a certain theological agenda is operative. Christology — Jesus' anointing at his baptism (10,38) and exaltation at his resurrection/Ascension (2,36; 13,33) do not contradict the fact that he was the Messiah from his conception by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1,35). Soteriology — Apart from Jesus, there is no salvation (4,12). God's impartiality does not teach that the heathen will be judged by the light they have rather than the light that did not reach them (10,34). Cornelius is as yet incomplete. Luke is clear about salvation coming only through Jesus (11,14; 16,30-31; Luke 8,11-15). Luke-Acts knows a vicarious atonement soteriology (Luke 22,19-20; Acts 8,32-33; 20,28). Pneumatology — Pentecost was a unique, unrepeatable event in church history. Post-Pentecost converts receive Spirit-baptism at conversion (1 Cor 12,13). Empowering by the Spirit for witness continues, however. There may be occasional miraculous manifestations of the Spirit today in power encounters in pioneer situations. Nevertheless, miracles are not essential to the church's advance. Evangelism — A "go" theology must drive the church today. The goal is living together in a multicultural body of believers. Church growth theory's "homogeneous unit principle" which produces monocultural churches is contrary to God's ideal which is inclusive evangelism across ethnic lines.

What shall we make of a commentary that treats the text of Acts as reliable history with a moralizing tendency? It will not satisfy the scholar looking for technical data on Acts; nor will a Christian of another outlook find in it the desired relevance. For the community for which this volume was designed, however, Larkin's reading of Acts will function as intended by the editors of the series.

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# NUNTII PERSONARUM ET RERUM

## Problems of a History of Earliest Christianity (\*)

### 1. *Our Very Fragmentary Knowledge*

Alexander Lane Fox, the English historian, begins his monograph about Alexander the Great with the remark that we cannot write a biography of any personality in antiquity except Augustine, Cicero and perhaps the Emperor Julian — the great letterwriters — but then he writes 568 pages, with the reservation: “The book is a search, not a story” (p. 11). In a similar way a History of Early Christianity can only be written in the form of a search and not as a thoroughgoing story. Unlike modern and even medieval history, where we often have the difficulty of mastering an abundance of information, in antiquity we possess in most cases only very fragmentary evidence. While we know what happened of nearly each day of Luther’s life, we have to be grateful if our knowledge of one year of famous Roman emperors fills one or two pages in Pauly-Wissowa<sup>(1)</sup>. The gaps in our knowledge of the Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds in antiquity are much larger than the amount of information still preserved. What can be said about ancient political history is even more true of ancient religion: How little we know about the foundation of the most important new cult in Hellenistic times, that of Sarapis in Alexandria! And we know even less about the transformation of oriental cults like that of Isis and Mithra in the form of “Hellenic” mysteries. The only three ancient religions possessing not only really broad evidence but also a consciousness of their own history are Judaism, its Christian offspring and — dependent on them — later Manicheism. This is because they were religions based on books, producing a broad literature. For us today this literature has been partially preserved by Jewish and Christian tradition or has been rediscovered by archaeological findings. Even here most of the great early Christian literature from the 1st and 2nd centuries has been lost, probably more than 90 per cent.

But, nevertheless, these scanty remains are much more than we have from other Greco-Roman religions or cults and are enough for us to attempt the historical reconstruction of earliest Christianity. We should not forget, however, that this will always be a search and that we do not arrive at a genuine, continuous history or a full picture with always clearly-de-

(\*) This article represents the text of the lecture given at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome on February 16th, 1996, when the writer held the “Joseph Gregory McCarthy Professorship”.

(1) Cf. R. HANSLIK, “M. Ulpius Traianus”, PRE Suppl. X, 1032-1102.

finer figures and traits. We can only reconstruct dispersed single spots, which we connect hypothetically by extrapolation, and so try to obtain more or less sharply-defined contours. Between these contours remain many large blank areas, but even these incomplete contours are extremely impressive, yet unique, because they contain the apostolic basis of our common faith. This is true with Jesus, Paul, John, Ignatius, Justin, with the communities in Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, and Rome. How abundantly rich must their oral teaching have been and how little do we really know about it!

We may compare our task with the reconstruction of an extensive mosaic, of which only scrappy remains are preserved, some large, others small, some with distinct outlines and clear colours, others half-destroyed and difficult to understand. Its real and total restoration remains an unattainable goal, but by hypothetical synopsis and cautious extrapolations we obtain not only the main, clear outlines but also further vivid details which give us an idea of its original greatness. This task never comes to an end, for new insights, discoveries and analogies will help us to revise and improve our attempt at restoration. It always remains an approach and therefore an everlasting task.

But, as always in historical research dangers are lurking precisely where we feel most self-confident. If we declare a major part of the fragments to be unimportant, namely later or spurious additions, because they do not fit into our preconceived ideas, we destroy the only real basis for our restoration. It is surely easier to design a hypothesis of restoration without annoying discrepancies, but this may be, more than we suppose, the invention of our wishful fantasy. In modern biblical scholarship since the enlightenment or since the old Tübingen school of F.C. Bauer in the last century this was probably the most depressing problem: the careless disregard of sources and on the other hand their fantastic overinterpretation.

Radical critics, therefore, should prefer to remain silent about reconstruction, because with their method of investigation everything has become totally uncertain. Strangely enough, however, it is precisely these critics who, having radically cleared up the area, are becoming more and more talkative and inventive. This leads to my next point.

## 2. *The Method and Its Difficulties*

This question is easily answered and for that very reason proves to be difficult. Our method is "philological-historical", and therefore, of course, always critical too. "Criticism" comes from the Greek κρίνειν, according to Liddell and Scott's lexicon "to separate, distinguish, choose, decide". It is the same method which the ancient historian or philologist uses for his sources and texts. There is no other higher, inspired or spiritual and, therefore, surer method for the theological historian or exegete. On the other hand, in Germany theologians like to speak of the "historical-critical-method", which has been used by some so radically in destroying the fragments, the sources we possess, that it became in its final

consequence an "unhistorical-uncritical" method, leaving, behind a *tabula rasa*. From Ferdinand Christian Bauer there are only a few steps to Bruno Bauer who denied in the end the historicity of Jesus and Paul. Modern radical criticism, based in this century especially upon Rudolf Bultmann, sometimes has had a similar tendency, which depends on a disregard for historical reality, and it likes to speak contemptuously of "bruta facta". According to Friedrich Nietzsche, "Fakten sind dumm" — this may be a modern form of Docetism. The history of religious groups and their thought in antiquity cannot be reduced to a more or less timeless self-understanding of the individual or, on the contrary, to preconceived social movements as their "Oberbau" (overhead structure), foreshadowing the search for a classless society; all religious groups always have their own traits, values, individuality and fate.

On the other hand the historical-philological method can never be fundamentalistic or apologetic. To make use of it is for the present a *secular* endeavor. The belief in the historical inerrancy of Scripture was a rationalistic perversion. Scripture as the Word of God creating faith is at the same time always very human, and therefore the famous remark by Jerome in his letter to Pammachium about the best method of translation<sup>(?)</sup> can be applied to Scripture as well: "errasse humanum est et confiteri errorem prudentis". The biblical authors are all children of their time with its own world view and they are not omniscient. In some ways the Bible is the most realistic human book in the world and it is only in this human form that God speaks to us. Biblical exegesis and history are, therefore, always a path between Scylla and Charybdis, between uncritical scepticism and unhistorical fundamentalism. In his approach to historical truth the theologian writing a history of early Christianity is not primarily a preacher of faith. By his arguments based solely on the evidence of the sources he wants to convince each interested scholar or reader independently of his ideology or religious confession. I think there is a feeling of historical common sense, probability and reality which unites them all against a way of thinking which sees everything only with dogmatically coloured spectacles. Our aim is *historical truth*, a value independent in itself even if we can only approach it surely not in an absolute but only in a *relative way*, in degrees of probability. As a Christian I know that the absolute truth is far beyond our human possibilities, it is found only with God, the Lord of all events, of all history, of all truth. And faith in *his* truth of revelation in Christ is the gift of grace alone. But for that very reason, every earnest search for this very fragmentary, relative truth in history is indirectly also a service of God. And therefore we cannot do it without respect or even reverence for this relative, fragile truth. At the end of this paper we will come back to this decisive point. All this means that in our approach we have to see our *limitations*.

First, our subject is remote, strange and difficult. The Galilaean farmers and fishermen were living in a world rather far removed from an

(?) Jerome, *Ep.* 57,12.



educated Central European, a mythic world full of angels, demons and apocalyptic hopes. The apostolic-traveller and missionary Paul and the communities founded by him expected and described the immediately imminent parousia of the Lord, and he tells us about his personal experience of being enraptured into the third heaven and paradise. Justin, the former Platonic philosopher was a fervent Chiliast. To understand them and their world we need some sort of grasp: we should relinquish our enlightened feeling of superiority and try to acquire an insight into the often strange thoughts, hopes and fears of these people so distant from us. For only if we try to understand them in their own times, through their own language and spiritual experience are we able to explain, very partially and in a limited way, the deeper reasons for what they really thought and for what really happened. Only in this way can we find the right analogies and causal connections. It is not our task to demythologise, a rather fatal expression introduced by R. Bultmann, for it has been too often misunderstood in the sense of elimination of mythical thought instead of engaging in genuine interpretation. The writer of religious history should have some sympathy or at least real inquisitive interest in his subject, even if it seems to be very mythological. Like all historians he needs some sort of persistent *curiosity* about the facts, including the strange ones. If somebody thinks that the earliest Christians were mainly poor fools, that their beliefs were total nonsense, he then perhaps can write a witty or sarcastic investigation, but surely not a reliable history of the earliest Christianity. Friedrich Engels, the friend of Karl Marx, who in the steps of Bruno Bauer thought that Christian theology was a "Blödsinnstheorie", a "theory of nonsense", really wrote only pure nonsense about the earliest Christians, nonsense which later became dogmatized in the Soviet Union<sup>(9)</sup>. We surely miss the point of our investigation if we approach it with a feeling of deep disgust or radical mistrust: we need at any rate some sort of sympathy with, or even curiosity for, our topic.

Second, to see our limits means that we have to concentrate first upon the texts and the phenomena described in them, since our possibilities to explain them adequately are often very restricted. Let us take as an example the early Christian miracle tradition, which has been disputed for 250 years. For the early Christians and their heaven-storming, high-flying enthusiasm this was an inherent part of their eschatological and spiritual experience. Paul, for instance, writes to the Romans about himself as a matter of course (15,17-19): "I have reason to be proud of my work for God... what Christ has wrought through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit" (ἐν δυνάμει σημείων καὶ τεράτων, ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος θεοῦ, cf. 2 Cor 12,12; 1 Cor 2,4). What experiences is the apostle thinking of here?

<sup>(9)</sup> In a letter of 27th Oct. 1890, *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Berlin 1952), 2, 465. See also F. ENGELS, "Bruno Bauer und das Urchristentum", *Marx-Engels-Werke* (MEW) 19, 297-305; id., "Das Buch der Offenbarung", MEW 21, 9-15; id., "Zur Geschichte des Urchristentums", MEW 22, 455-473; cf. B. Stasiewski, "Ursprung und Entfaltung des Christentums in sowjetischer Sicht", *Saeculum* 11 (1960), 157-179; I. LENZMANN, *Wie das Christentum entstand* (Wuppertal 1974).

Or take Luke, “the beloved physician” and companion of Paul in his last years. He describes many miracles, healings, exorcisms, apparitions of angels, and even a punishment miracle and two liberation miracles; what is the reality behind these stories? As a physician he was especially interested in such θαυμάσια or *mirabilia*. Goethe’s Faust two hundred years ago could still say: “Das Wunder ist des Glaubens liebstes Kind”, “the miracle is the most beloved child of faith”. This is, at least in German Protestantism, long past. Miracles rather have become “a scandal to enlightened faith”. The historian encounters a difficulty here. He cannot put the problem aside lightly with the remark, as radical critics did, that it is all pure invention, *pia fraus*; he can still less prove the historicity of miracle stories. He can only examine and judge each story separately by looking for parallels in the Old Testament and in the Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds, which often does not help much. Or he should — which is today rather neglected — look for well-attested analogies in church history. So, when Paul describes in 1 Cor 14,25 a strange case of thought-reading, we are reminded of the charisma of great spiritual characters like Don Bosco or Jean Baptiste Marie Vianney, le curé d’Ars. So the historical approach to miracles may not yield definite explanations and results, but it must examine the phenomenon seriously. This means remaining open to the question, because our modern understanding of nature and its reality seems to be different from the world of early Christian texts, but is still limited, and no one can deny the possibility of transcendent experience. Our scientific perception is always restricted and the real world is open to transcendence. But also the notion of miracle is ambivalent; it is found in many religions, often in the form of magic, and it is — for the historian — often extremely difficult to differentiate between widespread wishful legendary invention and rare real experience. Church history and modern New Age ideology teach us how desirous of miracles people can be. The most obvious and poignant example is the tradition of Jesus’ resurrection. We possess the testimony of Paul about his own apparition or vision of Christ, and of Peter, James and the other disciples and apostles. We know the earliest confession of their faith and we have the strange and partially different apparition stories in the Gospels, including the empty tomb. They have in my opinion a historical nucleus — very probably the women found the empty tomb. But here again we have a problem. The empty tomb alone was, as the reports in Matthew and John show, already a very ambivalent testimony. Only in the late apocryphal Gospel of Peter do we find a — fanciful — description of the event. For the claim of resurrection we have the apostolic testimony and confession, and this creates faith in the Resurrected One through the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*, and not by historical proof. The attempt to solve this historical difficulty by psychology leads, as modern examples show, to unbearable banalities<sup>(\*)</sup>. Also the hotly disputed problem of Jesus’ messianic claim cannot be solved by psychological speculation. We know only what was transmitted by the

(\*) Cf. G. LÜDEMANN, *Die Auferstehung Jesu* (Göttingen 1993) 108-112, 126-128.

earliest witnesses, what they heard from Jesus himself and saw with their eyes. Therefore, there can be no Jesus-psychology; we have no access to his "inner life" and we cannot dissect the mystery of his person. But the historical testimonies are sufficient. The traditions about his suffering and death are only understandable if he had a messianic, or perhaps better, superhuman, claim.

### 3. *Time and Space*

Each historical description has its proper boundaries in time and space, its beginning, its aim and its localities. It always needs some sort of basic *chronology* and *geography*. When we spoke earlier about Paul, the resurrection and Jesus, we had already made a decision. Hans Conzelmann, in the steps of Bultmann, begins his "Geschichte des Urchristentums" with the *Urgemeinde*, not with Jesus. I quote the first sentence of his 'preliminary remark': "Life and teaching of Jesus are the precondition of Church-history. Their description does not belong in it but before it. The history of the Church begins after the death of Christ...»<sup>(5)</sup>. But, I would ask, did it not begin already with the calling of the disciples? Is not the person Jesus himself — not only the "resurrected" or "elevated" one — the real cornerstone of the church, the θεμέλιος (1 Cor 3,11)? Can we describe a building without its foundation? And do not the oldest and the last of the gospels, Mark and John, and even at this stage the *logia* source, begin their narrative with John the Baptist as the forerunner of Jesus? They do this because Jesus himself saw in him the Elijah preparing the coming of the Son of Man and the Kingdom of God. A history of early Christianity should therefore begin with him, the forerunner, and should include the Jewish-Palestinian milieu of the Jesus movement. Both John the Baptist and Palestinian Judaism are the real "preconditions" of a history of the Early Church. We cannot repeat the famous argument of Wellhausen: "Jesus was not a Christian but a Jew"<sup>(6)</sup>; for primitive Christianity as a whole, is still a Jewish messianic movement. The new name *Christianoi* was first given to the believers in Antioch (Acts 11,26) about ten years later and not in Jerusalem, and *Christianoi* comes from Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Jesus the Messiah of Israel. Jesus of Nazareth was not made Messiah by the primitive church after the Easter event, his own ultimate claim was to be the Messiah of Israel. Therefore he was crucified. All this shows how deeply rooted in ancient Judaism even the title *Christianoi* is; for Jewish ears it means not only followers of Christ but even more "messianic people" and was probably given by pagans to the new Jewish sect. The Jewish name remained *nosrīm*, *naṣraijā*.

Any dramatic performance upon a stage — and the foundations of Christianity are dramatic from the beginning — needs a setting. The setting

<sup>(5)</sup> Cf. H. CONZELMANN, *Geschichte des Urchristentums* (NTD ErgR 5; Göttingen 1969) I: Vorbemerkung.

<sup>(6)</sup> J. WELLHAUSEN, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien* (Berlin <sup>2</sup>1922). New edition: *Evangelienkommentare* (Berlin-New York 1987) 102.

of earliest Christianity is Palestinian Judaism, or, more exactly, the first scene takes place in the small province of Galilee, while the second occurs in Jerusalem — and nowhere else. The main sources for the beginning, the gospels and Acts, describe rather exactly the area. And then we have one dominating source for the stage design, the Jewish historian Josephus. We could almost call him *cum grano salis* “a fifth Gospel” — surely his works are much more important for the understanding of earliest Christian beginnings than the apocryphal Gospels like that of Thomas, Peter and so on which are so highly praised today. This means that a pre-Christian Gnosis or Hellenistic Syncretism and Greek or Oriental Mysteries do not belong to the original scenery. Early Christianity is not a “syncretistic religion”, as Hermann Gunkel and the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule supposed<sup>(7)</sup>. It is a product of the fertile and unbelievably rich soil of Ancient Judaism where we cannot make a basic distinction between Palestinian and Hellenistic Jews since even the first Greek speaking Jewish-Christian community has its origins in Jerusalem itself. It was in Jerusalem that the young ambitious Pharisaic scribe Shaul from Hellenistic Tarsus persecuted the Hellenists. Most New Testament writings are written by Jewish Christians, from the Letters of Paul up to the Johannine Corpus and the Apocalypse, and there are no early Christian traditions which must be derived *directly* from pagan religion. They could all have been obtained through Jewish mediation. The theological influence of pagan Christianity appears only in the third generation in Clement of Rome, Ignatius and the author of the very late Pastoral Epistles. Luke, the companion of the later Paul, writing in the early eighties was a Godfearer, the first Greek who reports, in quite a reliable manner and with considerable sympathy, for ancient Judaism.

The geographical development came in progressive steps. The expulsion of the Hellenists and the conversion of Paul led to the first Jewish-Christian mission in Arabia (by Paul), Syria and Cilicia, countries in the immediate neighbourhood, which the Jews expected to become part of the future Messianic reign. About the year 40 AD the new messianic community had already reached Antioch, Tarsus, Cyprus, and probably, Rome, and with the beginning of the fifties, Western Asia Minor and Greece. Paul then was already looking westward toward Spain, to the end of the *oikumene*. The silence about Alexandria in the first century, which became so important from the time of Clement and Origen, is strange. In the year 70 AD Mark (13,10) could write that the Gospel must be preached to all peoples before the imminent parousia of the Lord, but another one hundred years pass before we hear from Irenaeus that the Church had “spread over the whole *oikumene* till the ends of the world”<sup>(8)</sup> and had communities in Germania, Gaul, Spain, Egypt, Libya and the Oriental countries. Tertullian adds that the Britanni, Sarmatians, Dacians and Scythians “and many

<sup>(7)</sup> *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments* (FRLANT 1; Göttingen 1903) 95. See M. HENGEL—A. M. SCHWEMER, *Paul between Damascus and Antioch* (London 1997).

<sup>(8)</sup> Irenaeus, *Ad. Haer.* 1,10,1; vgl. 10,2.

other tribes" (9) had such communities. But already the Lucan assembly of Diaspora Jews at Pentecost in Jerusalem in connection with Acts 1,8 and the foreign language miracle looks like a foreshadowing of the worldwide mission.

It is with Irenaeus in Gaul, Tertullian in Carthage and Clement in Alexandria, and the first large Corpus of sources we have received from them that we reach the best chronological delimitation of a history of early 'primitive Christianity'. The time of the Universal Catholic Church begins with a "Canon" of Holy Scriptures, the *Regula fidei* and a relatively fixed episcopal organisation, all of which developed in the second century and had become quite fixed at its end. These three authors also give a lot of information about this second century when Christianity was growing, despite all the bitter opposition and sporadic persecution, into a powerful, well-organised religion in the Roman Empire and when Gnosticism arose as a first speculative attempt, based on Platonism, at a Christian religious philosophy for the educated classes, a philosophy which quickly degenerated into unbridled dualistic speculation. Most histories of earliest Christianity end their descriptions too early and begin too late. I do not believe, therefore, that a history of the earliest Church should be limited mainly to the canonical writings of the New Testament (perhaps including the so-called Apostolic fathers), for it would then end in the darkest time of our knowledge of the nascent Church, the first half of the second century. The decisive problem of a history of the earliest Church is how the apostolic preaching and tradition, as we find them in Paul and the Gospels, lead with some internal historical consistency and logic to the "Reichskirche", the Imperial Church, in its astonishing ecumenical unity and diversity, which was able to outlast two thousand years of history and to shape western civilisation. The chronological limits given by 'the canonical writings' should not be overrated. The most significant turning point is the year 70 which, after the martyrdom of James, Paul and Peter, marks the end of the Apostolic age, necessitated Gospel writing and led finally to the definitive separation of church and synagogue. The stoning of James, the Lord's brother, and of other leading Jewish Christians, the flight to Pella, the Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem combined to deliver a deadly blow to what was, until that time, the leading Jewish-Christian community in the Holy City of Israel. The centre of the Church shifted in some way, as 1 Clement shows, from Jerusalem to Rome, the capital of the empire. Another important point is reached seventy-four years later with the separation of the Marcionite church in Rome. However this date only indicates a critical time of transition and not a real new era. Another intermediate stage is reached with the last decade of the second century with the already mentioned definite consolidation of the Church in the Roman Empire. But a really new era finally arrives only in 311 with the tolerance edict of Emperor Galerius and the conversion of Constantine. But this point is too late for a history of the *earliest* Church. New Testament Scholars should not forget to study, however, the decisive

(9) Tertullian, *Ad. Jud.* 7.

sources of the third century, which are so important. And in any case we should have the courage to pass over the boundaries of our too narrowly specialized field and so become much better patristic, classical and Judaistic scholars.

#### 4. *The Form and the Contents*

History comes from the Greek ἱστορία, which originally means inquiry by one's own research and observation and then a "written account of one's inquiries" or written "narrative"<sup>(10)</sup>. The New Testament and the Apostolic fathers do not use this word. We find it first in the Apologists, to show the difference between the μυθικαὶ ἱστορίαι of the Greeks, and Biblical history, while noting the greater age and trustworthiness of the latter<sup>(11)</sup>.

But already in Luke we have the reality when he says that he, like others before him, wants to write a διήγησις, "a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us", but a more accurate one, "having followed all things closely" and in an exact order. The prologue of Luke's Gospel is the first trace of higher education in the nascent church. The author is really the "beloved physician" of Colossians 4,14. In a time where ahistorical and timeless existential interpretation, structuralism, or reader response, translated in German as "Rezeptionsästhetik", are highly esteemed, we should not forget that the most influential early Christian writers, the evangelists, wrote historical narratives. They did not want to be understood as writing pure fiction, but, to quote Luke again, "a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us", which "were delivered to us (and not invented) by those who from the beginnings were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word". This does not mean that Luke and the other Gospel writers wrote "history" in a modern or even critical sense, and surely even Mark and still much more John tried to give their story a deeper, sometimes even allegorical sense. They are all at the same time theological thinkers. However, they still wanted to write "things that had been accomplished". So Luke undertakes the task of writing in two books a "historical" narrative which begins with a vision of the priest Zacharias in the Temple in the later days of King Herod and the Emperor Augustus, and which ends with the two years of Paul's Roman imprisonment in the time of Nero, where the great missionary is "teaching the kingdom of God, and... about the Lord Jesus Christ, quite openly and unhindered" (Acts 28,30) — a program for the future. The narrative covers a period of nearly seventy years. Surely these books too contain quite a lot of edifying legend, which is not in the strict sense historical. After all, the writer is the child of his time and of his Jewish-Christian milieu. Yet nevertheless he is the first Christian historian and in ancient terms quite a

<sup>(10)</sup> LSJ, 842.

<sup>(11)</sup> See E.J. GOODSPEED, *Index Apologeticus* (Leipzig 1912) 139; Aristides, *Apol.* 17,7; Tatian, *Disc.* 1,1; and about ἱστορικοὶ esp. 31,1; Athenagoras, *Sup.* 20,3 and 26,1.

trustworthy one. He links world history with his narrative in the synchronism in Luke 3,1 rather exactly, leading to the year 27 C.E. as the time of the appearance of John the Baptist. Another important date is the expulsion of the Jews from Rome, according to Orosius in the ninth year of Claudius (Acts 18,2), about 48 C.E., and shortly thereafter Luke notes the presence of the proconsul Gallio in Corinth in 51-52. The διήγησις, the narrative of his two books, is the backbone of the first and most important chapters of a history of earliest Christianity. His description of Jesus, the Jerusalem Church, the nascent Church in Syria up to the Apostolic council and the following Pauline mission surely gives a rather abridged, one-sided and goal oriented narrative of the Apostolic time, ending rather abruptly with Paul in Rome before the catastrophe of the Neronian persecution. But we possess no better record, and it seems to me almost a miracle that we have his two volumes. Nor should we forget Paul, the first Christian author. He was a unique, charismatic, theological letter-writer, but in Galatians 1 and 2 he gives us an extremely interesting piece of apostolic "history" *in nuce*. And his confessional narrative about Jesus' death, resurrection and appearances (1 Cor 15) is, as the earliest "report", as important as the rather different Easter stories of the Gospels, and the same is true of the very short "story" about the Last Supper in 1 Cor 11. I am sure Paul was not only a fascinating teacher, but surely also a great story-teller. We possess only the shadow of teaching in his letters and yet they remain as unparalleled testimonies of his apostolic authority. With him Christian theology begins. But when he founded a new community he surely had also to tell narratives about Jesus, especially about his passion. About this community-founding preaching of the apostle, however, we know nearly nothing. What would we not give for one afternoon in the school of Tyrannos in Ephesus! Christianity began with kerygmatic story-telling!

The very incomplete διήγησις of Luke ends with Paul in Rome and the next extant continuous history was only written nearly two hundred and fifty years later by Eusebius. We possess some interesting narrative fragments and lists of bishops from the *Hypomnemata* of Hegesippus, written about 180 AD, but we do not know the exact character of the work. According to Eusebius, who quotes him, it was not a real history but rather an antagonistic apology "containing in five books the unadulterated tradition of the apostolic preaching in a very simple literary form" <sup>(12)</sup>. Even the great work of the bishop of Caesarea was not a real history, a narrative of events in the strict sense. Although he had the unique library of his predecessor Pamphilus at his disposal he could not write a continuous historical narrative. The great diversity of already fragmentary sources forced him to compose a work containing single episodes, sketches of famous personalities, bishops, teachers, heretics and martyrs, biographical anecdotes, lists of authors and their books with smaller or larger quotations about important facts, like those from martyrologies, letters and official documents. It is probably more a history of early Christian literature,

(12) Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 4.8.2.

thought and biography than a genuine chronologically continuous narrative. He was in this matter dependent upon his very different sources, but it is precisely this which shows the high quality of his work. Luke was writing about a much shorter period and did not have nearly as many literary sources. In Acts he is mainly using oral information and his own memory. That they both — Eusebius and Luke — are genuinely serious “historians”, although each in his own way, becomes evident in the comparison of their works with the apocryphal acts and gospels or with later martyrologies from the *Acta Sanctorum*. Without the two works of Luke and the first five or six books of Eusebius’ *historia ecclesiastica* a history of the earliest church could not be written.

Our attempt should in some way follow the ingenious example of Eusebius, but, of course, without its strongly apologetic tendencies and its often very one-sided judgements, and should use modern analytical methods, just as he used the highly developed rhetorical and historiographical methods of his time. We should not forget that the basis for his history was his earlier extremely learned chronology, later translated into Latin and expanded by Jerome. In the 20th century this subject has too often been neglected. We have still to work with Harnack’s great chronology which appeared in 1897 — a hundred years ago.

Therefore a history of earliest Christianity should be a *narrative* (critical, of course) where the sources allow it and where we have relatively clear contours of the events. It must on the other hand, however, include the description of the Christian *literature* which has been preserved, the circumstances of its origins and — most important — its *theological thought*. The nucleus here, or better, the guiding line, is in my opinion the *development of christology* and only in the second place the growth of church organisation. Faith, not social structure, was the propelling power. Further, it must treat the changing political and sociological background, the development of church polity, worship and confession. Because of the multiple aspects of life and thought in the nascent Church we should strive not only for a pure synopsis but for a real synthesis. The greatest miracle of the first hundred and eighty years remains for me the relative unity of the Church — without political compulsion.

The usual rigid distinctions in New Testament (and patristic) scholarship between biographical or historical events, introduction to the individual writings (so called *Einleitungsfragen*), exegesis and theology of the New Testament, between the history of the church and its theological thought, all become dangerous and misleading when applied strictly and separately to the description of the first two centuries of the young church. For all texts, even all phenomena, are linked together, and they cannot be really understood separately. For an understanding of Paul, the unity of his apostolic ministry and preaching, of biography and theological thought is a prerequisite; and one cannot understand the Johannine Corpus without inquiring about its authors, its school and its historical integration. The present predilection for a purely text-immanent interpretation, for simply synchronic structuralistic or for a timeless readers’ response interpretation, without looking at the rich historical context, brings the danger of reading



one's own modern structural or hermeneutical ideas into the ancient, distant and strange texts. A text-immanent approach can be the beginning of an investigation but it can never be the ultimate aim, if we really want to understand an early Christian writing and its author in its different time and culture. For a genuine understanding we must see its coherence with other texts, traditions, authors, groups and opinions emerging from the beginnings of Christianity and its Jewish and Greco-Roman background. There will be an enormous difference in the exegetical understanding of the Fourth Gospel if I date it with Klaus Berger in the fifties in a Samaritan context, or with Klaus Wengst after 70 AD, in the reign of Agrippa II in Eastern Jordan, or with Baur of the Tübingen school, and now (as regards its final redaction) with Walter Schmithals at about 170 AD in Montanistic circles in Asia Minor. Personally I think Irenaeus comes closest to the historical truth in his famous Gospel-report at the beginning of the third book of his *Adversus haereses* where he attests the publication of the Fourth Gospel in Ephesus in the early period of Trajan. This applies also to authorship, if I argue that the author is not the Apostle and Son of Zebedee, but the presbyter John and "disciple of the Lord" mentioned by Papias. The Johannine Corpus is a basic pillar for our understanding of the theological development in Asia Minor during the second century as we see from Melito, Apollinaris, Polycrates and Irenaeus. It is also a necessary presumption for the understanding of the Montanist movement and the quartodecimal pascal customs<sup>(13)</sup>.

Of course our attempts at an historical integration of the different source materials are often hypothetical, but is not the same true with our exegetical results and linguistic and literary analysis? A history of the Earliest Church must always work with heuristic hypothesis, with probabilities and plausibilities, just as in all other area of ancient history.

The synthesis of events and thought in the first one hundred and eighty years of the Church remains, therefore, always a new task. It can be compared with the building of a medieval cathedral which never comes to an end because when we think it is finished, parts of it have to be restored. How much have new discoveries of texts, in the last one hundred and eighty years since the radically critical Tübingen school, compelled us to revise our opinions? The words "gnosis", "sophia", "mysterion" and the different forms of dualism in early Christian texts have acquired a new orientation since we discovered in the Qumran library not only quite a new form of "ethical dualism" but also abundant evidence for the Hebrew equivalents *da'at*-gnosis, *hokhmah*-sophia and *raz*-mystery.

On the other hand, the texts of Nag Hammadi did not give us the expected evidence for a pre-Christian pagan origin of Gnosticism. It is rather a movement from after the time of Christ, and mostly Christian<sup>(14)</sup>.

Therefore, the search for new sources or analogies which bring new light, new evidence is one of our most important tasks, for only they can

<sup>(13)</sup> M. HENGEL, *Die johanneische Frage* (WUNT 67; Tübingen 1993).

<sup>(14)</sup> Cf. M. HENGEL, "Gnosis und Neues Testament" (FS. P. Stuhlmacher; Göttingen 1997).

help us to overcome the danger of pseudo-critical scholasticism and sterile, self-satisfied consensus.

### 5. *History and Faith*

In Germany I have often been accused of being a positivist. But philology and history are positive sciences, based on positive data, texts or other sources. The mystery of the incarnation, ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, means that the divine Logos entered history finally and decisively in a real, historically tangible "positive" person, Jesus of Nazareth. Incarnation belongs to the basic confession of Christian faith which can neither be ultimately proved nor disproved by serious historical research. It is not within its reach. That Jesus of Nazareth, whom we confess as the Son of God, really lived and that he died on the cross is not questioned by any qualified historian. The traditions about him and the apostolic preaching which founded the Church must be open to genuine scholarly research for all historians interested in it, without any misleading apologetic tendencies. The miracle of faith consists in the fact, that this apostolic message about Christ, the Gospel, has the power to overcome our selfish heart and to create faith and community. This pneumatic power of the Gospel is the only "proof" that the apostolic message is really inspired: δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, "the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith" (Rom 1,16). That means that the apostolic testimony of faith saving sinners in scripture is inspired, θεόπνευστος, not the letter of the text. This frees us to make an open investigation of all early Christian texts, of their theological thought, traditions and historical reports without any anxiety. Texts, theology, tradition, philological exegesis and history cannot really be separated in our studies, because they form an inseparable unity. There is no text which stands outside of an exegetical-historical approach. In this investigation we have to use all the effective tools of the philological-historical method, in the exegesis of the text itself, in its critical analysis and in the — often hypothetical — reconstruction of context and events. Our orienting compass is truth alone which always compels us to revise older, long-cherished opinions. This work is, as I said, perceived as a secular one, with secular methods. But as Christian scholars we believe and know it is God himself who speaks in history through human voices, who has even come himself in the flesh and who "died for us". It is the incarnation of the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ that gives our historical research, with its secular methods, into the origins of Christianity its ultimate dignity and necessity and which turns it into a special, even sacred, task for the Christian scholar. We do not seek to prove the truth of revelation; we can only hear this truth if God opens our ears to hear him. Our goal is rather to *understand* his revelation in time and space better. The broad field of Anselm's *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding) receives here a new specification: *fides quaerens veritatem historicam* (faith seeking historical understanding). This task is for the Christian a part of his "Freiheit eines Christenmenschen" — his Christian liberty. It is service for truth and

liberty in research, with both of these undertaken in responsibility towards God and his Church, towards our own conscience and the scholarly world, according to the word of the Apostle “For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth” (2 Cor 13,8).

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